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PROPOSED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997*

MAJOR PROGRAMME VII. HUMAN RIGHTS, FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

Programme 35. Promotion and protection of human rights

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
A.	Programme	35.1 - 35.9	2
	1. General orientation	35.1 - 35.3	2
	2. Overall strategy	35.4 - 35.7	2
	3. Subprogramme structure and priorities	35.8 - 35.9	3
B.	Subprogrammes	35.10 - 35.18	4
	1. Implementation of international instruments and procedures	35.10 - 35.18	4
	2. Elimination and prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities and vulnerable groups	35.19 - 35.26	6
	3. Advisory services and technical co-operation	35.27 - 35.37	7
	4. Research, studies and standard-setting	35.38 - 35.43	9

* The present document contains programme 35 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The complete medium-term plan will subsequently be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1).

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PROGRAMME 35. PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

A. Programme

1. General orientation

35.1 The Charter of the United Nations includes among the purposes of the Organization the achievement of international co-operation in solving problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. Article 13 of the Charter provides for the General Assembly to initiate studies and make recommendations for those purposes and Article 55 states that the United Nations shall promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms. All Members pledge themselves, under Article 56, to take joint and separate action in co-operation with the Organization for the achievement of the purposes set forth in Article 55.

35.2 The aforementioned Articles of the Charter, together with the human rights instruments and the policies and procedures subsequently established by the United Nations organs, provide the framework for the human rights programme of the Organization. Progressively, human rights have become part of international law and international consciousness. The norms contained in human rights instruments are used to assess the way Member States respect the rights of their citizens.

35.3 The Charter's conception of the interrelationship between human rights, peace and development will continue to guide the United Nations in its approach to human rights in the decade of the 1990s. There can be no lasting security or sustained economic and social progress without respect for human rights. Numerous situations of tension and conflict have been rooted in disregard for the human rights of individuals, minorities, groups or entire peoples. Development will not be assured, nor its fruits equitably shared, if it is not securely anchored in respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2. Overall strategy

35.4 In the coming decade, the international community can be expected to turn increasingly to United Nations human rights organs, such as the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, for peaceful and constructive solutions to human rights problems that might otherwise give rise to tensions. Those organs should become more and more the focal point of international efforts to act to prevent violations of human rights and their consequences, to carry out research into emerging problems and to develop new international standards and means of implementation that merit the confidence of all. They can also be expected to assess the achievements of the past 40 years, and how the challenges ahead can best be met, both in relation to the general human rights programme and in relation to specific subjects such as the fight against racism and racial discrimination.

35.5 The experience of the past few years has shown the range and complexity of the often interrelated issues brought to United Nations human rights organs for

consideration and study. One of the main tasks of the United Nations in the coming years will be to bring into sharper focus the connection between the pursuit of peace, development and the enhanced protection of human dignity. The Secretariat will play its role in conjunction with Member States, as well as with non-governmental organizations.

35.6 A related major task before the international community in the coming years will be to make the rights and freedoms already laid down in the body of international human rights law a reality for everyone. Thus, in parallel with continuing efforts in the field of standard-setting and the priority attention devoted to the international implementation process, greater emphasis will be given to the requirements of national institution-building, as well as information and education. Through the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights launched by the General Assembly by its resolution 43/128 of 8 December 1988, the Centre for Human Rights will strive to increase world-wide public understanding and awareness of human rights and fundamental freedoms. It will co-ordinate the activities for the Campaign within the United Nations system and will maintain contact with Governments, regional and national institutions, non-governmental organizations and concerned individuals.

35.7 Emphasis will continue to be placed upon the universal ratification and implementation of the norms proclaimed by the United Nations and already agreed upon in principle. In order to help in creating the conditions for implementation of such norms, those Governments which so desire should receive the support of the United Nations in setting up or strengthening national infrastructures for the promotion and protection of human rights. This support will be provided through the programme of advisory services and technical assistance and will include, depending on the expressed needs, training of government officials and administrators of justice; expert advice; and technical assistance, for instance, in the building up of law libraries and law faculties, and in the drafting of legal texts in conformity with international standards. The overall objective of the Secretariat for the 1990s will be to contribute to the development of a truly universal culture of human rights comprising a framework for international law, national systems backed by advice and technical assistance, and an informed public opinion.

3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

35.8 In the light of orientation, the programme on promotion and protection of human rights will consist of the following subprogrammes:

Subprogramme 1. Implementation of international instruments and procedures

Subprogramme 2. Elimination and prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities and vulnerable groups

Subprogramme 3. Advisory services and technical co-operation

Subprogramme 4. Research, studies and standard-setting

35.9 Among the tasks entrusted to the programme, highest priority will be given to the implementation of international instruments and procedures.

B. Subprogrammes

SUBPROGRAMME 1. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

(a) Objectives

35.10 The legislative authority for subprogramme 1 derives from General Assembly resolutions 2106 A (XX), 2200 A (XXI), 3068 (XXVIII), 33/173, 39/46, 44/25, 44/128 and 44/135; Economic and Social Council resolutions 5 (I), 9 (II), 277 (X), 474 A (XV), 728 F (XXVIII), 1235 (XLII), 1503 (XLVIII), 1985/17 and 1988/4; and Commission on Human Rights resolutions 8 (XXIII) and 20 (XXXVI).

35.11 The United Nations has promulgated a significant number of international conventions and declarations on human rights. There remains a gap, however, between these internationally recognized norms and their application, the reasons for which are diverse. Many States have not yet subscribed to such internationally recognized norms. Where Governments have done so, they may not have the personnel or the expertise needed to integrate the provisions of conventions into their national system. In some situations the rule of law is fragile. The need to promote the application of existing international norms remains essential.

35.12 Individuals and groups often find the need to address themselves to the United Nations to draw attention to problems they are encountering or to request its intercession so as to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is the role of the United Nations to react adequately, promptly and effectively to such appeals.

35.13 Policy-making organs, when considering situations of alleged violations of human rights in certain countries or territories, require factual information and analyses. This is also true with regard to widespread phenomena of serious violations. In those situations, the policy-making organs have found it necessary to respond to appeals regarding individual cases. Accordingly, procedures and mechanisms dealing with alleged violations of human rights to be applied by individual experts, committees or working groups mandated by policy-making organs have been a regular feature of the human rights programme.

35.14 Thus, the objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To ensure continuing implementation of international norms and treaties in the field of human rights, including:

(i) The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol thereto, as well as the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;

(ii) The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;

(iii) The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid;

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(iv) The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

(v) The Convention on the Rights of the Child;

(vi) Such other conventions dealing with human rights as may be adopted by the United Nations, including in particular the draft international convention on the protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families;

(b) To respond positively to petitions or appeals received by the United Nations;

(c) To provide policy-making organs with the pertinent facts and analyses in order to assist in the consideration of situations of alleged violations of human rights, in the review of world-wide phenomena of especially serious violations and, in connection with the latter task, to respond to appeals regarding individual cases.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

35.15 The methods of work of the Secretariat are, in the first place, determined by the relevant conventions themselves, particularly the procedures for examination of reports. Other means of action include the encouragement of further ratifications or accessions to the international instruments on human rights; the enhancement and deepening of the dialogue between the States parties to these instruments and the relevant monitoring bodies, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee against Torture and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Group of Three on Apartheid; the promotion of further exchanges of experience among Governments on the application of international instruments and standards; and the improvement of United Nations procedures for monitoring States' compliance with their treaty obligations, particularly through the utilization of consolidated reporting guidelines and the computerization of the work relating to reporting of the treaty monitoring bodies. New treaties coming into force, such as those on the rights of the child, migrant workers or the optional protocol against the death penalty, will require new approaches.

35.16 The implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child will pose a new and in some ways different challenge to the United Nations. Information and expert advice will have to be mobilized from many different sources to support the work of the Committee, which will, for the first time in the annals of the United Nations, be charged with promoting all the human rights of a specific group - the children of the world - and will assist in bringing about real changes in the way they live. New and imaginative methods of turning international norms into national realities will have to be developed.

35.17 The consideration of petitions is carried out in accordance with the procedure established by the competent organs, notably Economic and Social Council resolutions 728 F (XXVIII), 1235 (XLII) and 1503 (XLVIII). Petitions are also handled in accordance with the procedures established under relevant international conventions, such as the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms

of Racial Discrimination, or the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

35.18 The strategies applied under procedures or mechanisms dealing with alleged violations of human rights or in the pursuit of contacts with Governments follow the specific mandate decided upon in each instance by the authorizing organ.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. ELIMINATION AND PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

(a) Objectives

35.19 The legislative authority for subprogramme 2 derives from General Assembly resolutions 1904 (XVIII), 2106 A (XX), 2541 (XXIV), 3068 (XXVIII), 36/55, 38/14 and 41/128; Economic and Social Council resolutions 5 (I) and 9 (II); and the report of the fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights (E/1371, para. 13).

35.20 The commitment to human dignity and equality and to non-discrimination is one of the pillars of United Nations human rights policy. Yet, many persons are denied effective enjoyment of basic human rights through discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, language or religion or because they belong to particularly disadvantaged groups. In some cases discrimination is overt. Apartheid, under which discrimination is a component of law and social policy, is the most notorious example. In other cases discrimination is covert, often constituting an invidious part of society that can even go unnoticed by many. In addition, many are denied full enjoyment of their human rights and suffer various forms of exclusion because they belong to particularly disadvantaged groups or sectors of society. Discrimination is intolerable in itself and a source of tensions, conflicts and strife as human beings demand respect for their inherent dignity. The very existence of discrimination is a serious threat to the universal enjoyment of human rights and to the objectives of the United Nations in promoting economic and social development and international peace and security.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

35.21 The expansion and implementation of United Nations programmes and plans of action against discrimination and for tolerance will underly the action of the Secretariat. This will include the application of the Programme of Action of the Second Decade against Racism and Racial Discrimination, activities aimed at bringing an end to apartheid, the efforts concerning the rights of migrant workers and their families and the work regarding the rights of indigenous populations.

35.22 The causes and conditions leading to racism and intolerance will increasingly be the focus of research, as will new and emerging forms of discrimination. This will lead to the development of legislative and social tools better adapted to the fight against discrimination. Attention will be centred on developing models for the establishment of national institutions promoting tolerance and fighting discrimination and on preparing model national laws against discrimination. Account will be taken of the results of 45 years' experience in the fight against racism and racial discrimination in order to identify achievements and failures, set guidelines for the future and develop new approaches for the elimination of age-old and emerging forms of discrimination.

35.23 In undertaking the implementation of the programme against racism, substantive contributions will be called for from agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, high-level focal points will be identified and the capacity and experience of non-governmental organizations will be fully utilized.

35.24 After adoption of the convention on the rights of all migrant workers and their families, research will continue on the situation and means to promote respect for the rights of this especially vulnerable group. Increased attention will also be given to the rights of minorities and to the search for peaceful solutions to minority problems. The forms of discrimination or intolerance based on religion or belief will also be addressed.

35.25 Another domain of work will relate to the human rights situation of such vulnerable groups as children (sale of children, child prostitution, exploitation of children, imprisoned children) and women subjected to prostitution or traffic of their persons. The implementation of existing international instruments will be strengthened and new ways will be sought to gather reliable information, identify problems and propose effective remedies both nationally and internationally. Similarly, the situation of indigenous populations, the basic standards needed to protect their rights, and appropriate mechanisms for doing so will receive continued attention following the remarkable advances already made in this field.

35.26 Finally, more attention will be given to the situation and rights of particularly disadvantaged and marginalized groups, notably the extremely poor. The task is and will remain essentially, in co-operation with other parts of the Secretariat and agencies of the United Nations system, to identify the causes for the denial of basic economic and social rights and to develop remedies. Emphasis will be placed on opening channels of communication and exchange between Secretariat units and between the various policy-making organs - for example, by establishing reciprocal observer status for representatives of organs dealing with similar issues. Efforts will also be made to strengthen exchanges between the United Nations and regional intergovernmental bodies dealing with human rights issues.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. ADVISORY SERVICES AND TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION

(a) Objectives

35.27 The legislative authority for subprogramme 3 derives from General Assembly resolutions 217 D (III), paragraph 2; 795 (VIII), paragraph 2; 926 (X); 1905 (XVIII), paragraphs 2 and 6; 32/127, paragraph 2; 41/121; 41/129; 41/130; 41/154; 42/118; 43/90 and 43/128; Economic and Social Council resolutions 5 (I); 9 (II); 1793 (LIV), paragraphs 2, 3, 5 and 6; 1923 (LVIII), paragraphs 1 and 2; and decisions 146 (XL), paragraph (b); 1978/14 and 1987/147; and Commission on Human Rights resolutions 17 (XXIII), paragraph 5 (b); 7 (XXXII), paragraph 2; 1986/54; 1987/37; 1987/38; 1987/39; 1988/74 and 1989/53.

35.28 Training courses, expert advice or opportunities for the exchange of information or experiences through national, regional or international workshops are often useful for government officials dealing with human rights questions, administrators of justice and law enforcement officials. Governments wishing to set up or strengthen national infrastructures for the promotion and protection of human rights may require technical assistance.

35.29 It is frequently the case that international instruments and standards promulgated by the United Nations for the promotion and protection of human rights are not known to the people whose rights they are intended to protect. Knowledge of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all people is essential to ensure the ultimate success of the efforts of the United Nations towards the universal implementation of international human rights standards. Thus, the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights provides the United Nations and the international community with an opportunity to reach out to the people of the world with a human rights message and make known the international machinery available for the promotion and protection of those rights and freedoms.

35.30 Without adequate public understanding or support, the activities of the United Nations for the promotion and protection of human rights cannot realize their potential. Such understanding should be enhanced by all means available, including workshops and publications.

35.31 Specifically, the objectives of the subprogramme are:

(a) To provide practical training and opportunities for exchange of information and experience to government officials or other persons whose functions are related to the promotion and protection of human rights;

(b) To provide expert and technical co-operation in the field of human rights to Governments, upon their request;

(c) To increase public awareness of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(d) To disseminate the international instruments and standards on human rights to people throughout the world and to enhance awareness of activities of the United Nations in the field of human rights.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

35.32 During the period covered by the medium-term plan, efforts will be further enhanced to provide Governments, at their request, with advisory services, for instance, in developing national laws in keeping with international standards and strengthening national institutions, systems and infrastructures for the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as in incorporating the human rights component in an integrated approach to development strategies. Special attention will be given to requests in the field of human rights in those countries which have experienced problems in the implementation of human rights standards, also in view of the priority attention that human rights organs, such as the Commission on Human Rights, and the General Assembly, have attached to such activities. In this connection, specific training courses will be provided for government officials dealing with the preparation and presentation of national reports to human rights supervisory bodies. Co-operation in this respect will be maintained with the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development.

35.33 In this regard, it may be expected that during the medium-term plan period more national, regional and subregional workshops and training courses will be organized for administrators of justice and government officials engaged in the implementation of international conventions on human rights, and that more countries in all regions of the world will develop forms of co-operation and assistance with the Centre for Human Rights, in keeping with their specific needs.

It must also be reiterated that advisory services and technical co-operation activities can be complementary to, but never a substitute for, investigations into allegations of human rights violations called for by the competent legislative bodies.

35.34 Within the framework of the activities for the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights, efforts will be made to strengthen relations and co-operation with the United Nations bodies concerned and with the media, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions so as to inform people world wide of the goals and activities of the United Nations in this sector and also to draw upon their support and their assistance for the universal realization of human rights. The Centre will co-ordinate a programme of activities, including the holding of workshops, the publication and distribution of information and reference materials, in all regions of the world in order to inform, educate and generate public understanding and support for the objectives of the United Nations in the field of human rights. This will be done in close co-operation with the Department of Public Information, other bodies of the United Nations system and the wider human rights community.

35.35 The dissemination of information on human rights will continue to place emphasis on the reproduction of the texts of the international instruments, norms and standards on human rights in as many languages as possible and on making the translated texts widely available, in co-operation with the Department of Conference Services.

35.36 During the medium-term plan period, new and more readable materials will continue to be issued in addition to the regular publications. Such materials will treat specific human rights themes of topical interest and will be intended for the public at large. Certain studies and reports submitted to those United Nations human rights bodies which might be of particular interest to the public will continue to be re-issued.

35.37 Thus, through the World Public Information Campaign, the United Nations will contribute to the promotion of a universal culture of human rights. It will do so by increasing the awareness of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the understanding of the international machinery available.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. RESEARCH, STUDIES AND STANDARD-SETTING

(a) Objectives

35.38 The legislative authority for subprogramme 4 derives from General Assembly resolutions 3218 (XXIX) and 41/120; Economic and Social Council resolutions 5 (I) and 9 (II); report of the fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights (E/1371, para. 13); and Commission resolutions 13 (XXXIII) and 17 (XXXVII).

35.39 In a fast-changing and increasingly interdependent world, societies are constantly confronted with new problems the human rights aspects of which need to be addressed. United Nations policy-making organs mandate new areas for research. These can be on specific aspects of already well-established rights or on emerging problems with relatively unexplored human rights dimensions. In addition, United Nations human rights organs review periodically the achievements of the human rights programme and the areas that need to be strengthened, and discuss directives for future activities. Certain areas of priority are identified for continuous

review in order to ascertain whether international standards are being respected, to identify emerging problems and to determine whether new standards or mechanisms are needed. This, in turn, necessitates the preparation of reports, research, the analysis and evaluation of information, and the conduct of mandated dialogues with Governments. Once human rights problems have been identified, the response of the international community is to develop norms, standards and the appropriate machinery for monitoring and implementation.

35.40 Accordingly, the objectives of subprogramme 4 are to study human rights issues for United Nations human rights organs, to elaborate international human rights standards for adoption by those organs and to review the implementation of certain standards.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

35.41 Basic research will continue into such domains as the realization of economic, social and cultural rights, the interrelated nature of respect for the various human rights, freedom of opinion and expression and the right to a fair trial. Research will be expanded in new areas such as the human rights aspect of bio-medical technology, discrimination against HIV-infected persons or people with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and on issues having an impact on the enjoyment of human rights, such as the external debt and readjustment policies, toxic waste and chemical weapons. Broad questions, such as the interrelationship between peace and human rights, will also be further studied. Questions of respect for human rights in the administration of justice and during states of emergency will receive continued emphasis. In this latter area, new standards will emerge relating to the declaration and to the application of states of emergency and respect for human rights, in particular, with regard to non-derogable rights.

35.42 Standard-setting will continue as mandated by policy-making organs. Such subjects as enforced or involuntary disappearances and the right to leave any country and to return to one's own country can be expected to be addressed. New areas of standard-setting will evolve from the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development and the Commission on Human Rights search for criteria for identifying progress in the realization of the right to development. Other topics for standard-setting will emerge from research work.

35.43 The basic challenge to the Organization in the field of research, studies and standard-setting in human rights in the next decade will be to deal successfully with a growing range of interrelated and complex issues. Research and studies will be built upon a concerted effort of reflection by Governments, non-governmental organizations, experts and the academic community. Planning and co-ordination within the Secretariat will be improved so as to avoid duplication. Research and reference facilities of the Centre for Human Rights will be gradually developed in co-operation with the library and documentation services of the Secretariat. The research tasks relating to the activities of the United Nations in human rights over the past 40 years, as well as the detailed and extensive information submitted to the United Nations, makes imperative the establishment of a computerized United Nations human rights data base. The data base will be updated continuously and made accessible, as appropriate, to Governments, specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, the media and the public. This would contribute to a better understanding of the work of the United Nations in human rights.

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MAJOR PROGRAMME VII. HUMAN RIGHTS, FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

Programme 36. International protection of and assistance to refugees

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Page
A. Programme	36.1 - 36.21	3
1. General orientation	36.1 - 36.15	3
2. Overall strategy	36.16 - 36.19	6
3. Subprogramme structure	36.20 - 36.21	8
B. Subprogrammes	36.22 - 36.59	8
International protection	36.22 - 36.38	8
1. International instruments relating to the status of refugees or otherwise benefiting refugees	36.22 - 36.26	8
2. Effective implementation of refugee rights	36.27 - 36.33	10

* The present document contains programme 36 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The complete medium-term plan will subsequently be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1).

CONTENTS (continued)

	Paragraphs	Page
3. Promotion and dissemination of principles of refugee law	36.34 - 36.38	12
Assistance	36.39 - 36.54	13
4. Emergency response and relief, care and maintenance	36.39 - 36.43	13
5. Durable solutions	36.44 - 36.54	15
UNRWA	36.55 - 36.59	18
6. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	36.55 - 36.59	18

PROGRAMME 36. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION OF AND ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES

A. Programme

1. General orientation

36.1 After the International Refugee Organization terminated its activities, international protection of and assistance to refugees continued to be provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), whose concern encompasses all refugees problems except those relating to the Palestine refugees, and by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

36.2 UNHCR was established on 1 January 1951 for a period of three years in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 319 A (IV) of 3 December 1949 and 428 (V) of 14 December 1950. The statute of the Office was adopted by the General Assembly as an annex to resolution 428 (V). The Office was established as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, under Article 22 of the Charter.

36.3 When it became clear that the refugee problems would require the continued attention of the United Nations, the General Assembly decided to prolong the mandate of UNHCR for a period of five years, renewable, beginning on 1 January 1954. Most recently, at its forty-second session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 42/108 of 7 December 1987, by which the Office was continued for a further five-year period from 1 January 1989 to 31 December 1993.

36.4 Although the protection function of UNHCR is derived from the statute of the High Commissioner's Office, other international legal instruments are of basic importance for the effective protection of refugees; the most important are the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 as supplemented by the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees of 1967.

36.5 The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), also a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, under Article 22 of the Charter, was established by resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 to provide assistance to the Palestine refugees. The Assembly has periodically extended its mandate since then, most recently by resolution 44/47 A of 8 December 1989 until 30 June 1993.

36.6 The overall objective of the programme, as it relates to UNHCR, corresponds to those set out in the statute, Convention and Protocol, in particular paragraph 1 of the statute, which states:

> "The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, acting under the authority of the General Assembly, shall assume the function of providing international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations, to refugees who fall within the scope of the present Statute and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees by assisting governments and, subject to the approval of the governments concerned, private organizations to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, or their assimilation within new national communities."

36.7 Paragraph 8 of the statute spells out the measures by which the High Commissioner shall provide for the protection of refugees falling under the competence of the Office:

"(a) Promoting the conclusion and ratification of international conventions for the protection of refugees, supervising their application and proposing amendments thereto;

"(b) Promoting through special agreements with governments the execution of any measures calculated to improve the situation of refugees and to reduce the number requiring protection;

"(c) Assisting governmental and private efforts to promote voluntary repatriation or assimilation within new national communities;

"(d) Promoting the admission of refugees, not excluding those in the most destitute categories, to the territories of States;

"(e) Endeavouring to obtain permission for refugees to transfer their assets and especially those necessary for their resettlement;

"(f) Obtaining from governments information concerning the number and conditions of refugees in their territories and the laws and regulations concerning them;

"(g) Keeping in close touch with the governments and inter-governmental organizations concerned;

"(h) Establishing contact in such manner as he may think best with private organizations dealing with refugee questions;

"(i) Facilitating the co-ordination of the efforts of private organizations concerned with the welfare of refugees."

36.8 In addition to those instruments, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner have adopted in recent years numerous resolutions, decisions and/or declarations that have further elaborated on the ways stipulated in paragraph 8 of the statute, particularly as regards the need to improve continuously or reorient the material assistance programmes provided by the High Commissioner in order to meet the increasing dimensions and complexities of refugees needs and problems. Beside the resolutions adopted each year by the General Assembly following its annual consideration of the report of the High Commissioner and the report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner, most recently resolution 44/137 of 15 December 1989, other relevant resolutions adopted in recent years are resolutions 41/70 of 3 December 1986 endorsing the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees; 41/122 of 4 December 1986 and 42/107 of 7 December 1987 on the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa; 42/106 of the same date, 43/116 of 8 December 1988 and 44/136 of 15 December 1989 on the International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa; 42/110 of 7 December 1987 on assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons of Central America; 43/118 of 8 December 1988 and 44/139 of 15 December 1989 on the

International Conference on Central American Refugees; 43/119 of 8 December 1988 and 44/138 of 15 December 1989 on the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees.

36.9 Those resolutions reflect the continued concern of the international community about the persistence and, in many situations, the aggravation of the problems confronting refugees. Among the problems that have been most often singled out by the General Assembly are the following: (a) problems of protection as a result of expulsion and refoulement of refugees, their unjustified detention and measures that do not recognize their special situation; (b) undermining of the safety and welfare of refugees and asylum-seekers in many regions on account of military or armed attacks, forced recruitment of refugees into armed forces and other forms of violence; (c) problems relating to asylum-seekers in distress at sea and to stowaway asylum-seekers; (d) special problems and needs of refugee and displaced women and children, who in many cases are exposed to a variety of difficult situations affecting their physical and legal protection as well as their material well-being; (e) financial problems confronting UNHCR and the need to achieve a better sharing of responsibilities and arrangements between all the bodies of the United Nations system and other concerned organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, for the implementation and financing of activities related to the search for durable solutions; and (b) the heavy burden placed, particularly, on host developing countries as a result of growing influxes of refugees and the need to share the burden of those States to the maximum extent possible through international assistance, in accordance with the conclusions on refugee aid and development adopted by the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner at its thirty-ninth session.

36.10 The programme of UNHCR, as elaborated below, derives, therefore, directly from the statute of the Office and takes duly into account the orientation, directives and measures recommended by the General Assembly and the Executive Committee of the Programme of the High Commissioner. It is, however, necessary to note at the outset that the programme is not able to foresee the totality of the refugee problem. That observation is equally valid whether one considers the issue of refugees as an emergency challenge that has to be faced or as an opportunity for a solution that must be found. The root causes that lead to refugee outflows, or the significant political developments that lend themselves to durable solutions for large numbers of refugees, especially through the preferred solution of voluntary repatriation, are beyond the direct control and planning mechanisms of UNHCR.

36.11 In order to reflect as adequately as possible the relevant recommendations of the legislative organs, the programme has been developed on the understanding that the function of providing international protection embraces all measures concerning the maintenance or the promotion of the well-being of refugees, whether legal, material or otherwise; moreover, the function of seeking permanent solutions is but an elaboration of an aspect of protection, namely, an emphasis on the importance of the task of seeking permanent solutions, as a fundmental aspect of the general protection function of UNHCR. Similarly, the elaboration of the programme has been guided by the need to ensure that the assistance provided by the Office to refugees ultimately promotes, to the fullest extent possible, their ability to take charge of their own lives and, wherever possible, to achieve a level of self-sufficiency. In this way, not only is human dignity restored to the situation of the refugee, but over-dependence on aid is avoided, a dependence that often complicates the eventual implementation of durable solutions.

36.12 In relation to the ultimate objective of assuring protection through permanent solutions of voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement, the search must go on simultaneously while emergency or enduring refugee situations are confronted; this search is characterized not only by seizing and building on political openings that are conducive to durable solutions, especially that of voluntary repatriation, through the work of tripartite commissions (made up of the Governments of the country of asylum, the country of origin, and UNHCR), but also by close consultations with the refugees themselves so as to ascertain what they see as in their best interests.

36.13 The role that development assistance might play in encouraging solutions to refugee situations, especially the solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration, should be emphasized. Not only does the international community need to recognize the sheer magnitude of the refugee problem and its impact on the socio-economic infrastructures and ecological systems of the receiving countries, most of which are developing countries, but there is also the need to highlight the role that development assistance can play both in preventing refugee outflows and contributing to their solution.

36.14 Given the complex nature of the root causes of refugee outflows, a recurring element in many of them is often underdevelopment or economic privation. Appropriately targeted development aid could play a significant role in reversing or at least mitigating situations leading to refugee outflows; this is not to say that refugees leave primarily for economic reasons, but it is to acknowledge that aid could have a role to play, for example, in encouraging positive human rights developments or discouraging situations conducive to violations of basic rights. It is a fact also that severe economic hardship, when an added element in situations of broad civil disorder, can be a factor tipping the balance in favour of departure, thus creating a refugee situation.

36.15 A link also exists between economic factors or opportunities in first asylum countries and the onward spontaneous movement of asylum-seekers from those countries to countries chosen for final settlement; this phenomenon is often called "irregular movements". Again, appropriately targeted development assistance might help to reduce the problems posed by such movements.

2. Overall strategy

36.16 The strategy will consist of a range of different types of initiatives and activities, the nature of which, in summary form, is as follows:

(a) Carrying out continuing consultations with Governments in order to promote further accession to a wide range of international and regional legal instruments relating to refugees, as well as to encourage them to adopt positive national legislation and administrative regulations on refugees;

(b) Publication of articles in newspapers and academic journals, as well as participation in conferences and public debates on refugee questions, in order to build up a climate of public opinion favourable to refugees;

(c) Close monitoring, through direct dialogue with Governments and with the assistance of other relevant agencies, of situations involving asylum-seekers and

refugees to ensure that obligations assumed and responsibilities owed towards refugees are respected;

(d) Developing contingency planning so as to improve the preparedness and response capabilities of UNHCR to refugee emergencies and to respond effectively to any invitation of the Secretary-General to participate in special humanitarian operations;

(e) Providing assistance to refugees in such a way that refugees themselves are involved in the delivery of assistance programmes and that those programmes are characterized by a development orientation from the earliest possible stage;

(f) Initiating and encouraging the creation, where circumstances permit, of tripartite commissions so as to facilitate and encourage voluntary repatriation;

(g) Ensuring in all relevant situations a linkage between refugee aid and development assistance, especially in the deployment of development assistance as a means of cementing permanent solutions, both voluntary repatriation and local integration;

(h) Carrying out continuing consultations with Governments to assure an adequate number of resettlement places in their countries for refugees, especially for vulnerable groups such as refugee women, in cases where resettlement is seen to be the appropriate permanent solution;

(i) Promoting an appropriate sharing of responsibilities and arrangements for financing of refugee-related activities between all the bodies of the United Nations system and other concerned organizations, both governmental and non-governmental; in this regard, UNHCR will be seeking to enter into memoranda of understanding that will reflect agreed arrangements.

36.17 The financing of the activities of UNHCR relies primarily on voluntary contributions. In 1989, about 96.5 per cent of the Office's total expenditure were financed by voluntary contributions. By 1992, it is expected that the Executive Committee would have reviewed thoroughly the extent of the UNHCR General Programmes and other assistance activities, in particular the issues relevant to the effective use of funds and administration of programmes and projects.

36.18 In carrying out its activities, UNHCR maintains consultations with Governments and with governmental and non-governmental organizations. Within the United Nations, UNHCR co-operates very closely, in particular with the Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship, the Centre for Human Rights, the Department of Public Information and the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), as well as with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance Programmes to Kampuchea. The Office maintains a very close co-ordination with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in particular at the field level. Co-ordination between UNHCR and other organizations of the United Nations system is provided through the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and its subsidiary bodies It is also provided through Memoranda of Understanding with some 10 organizations, including UNDRO, UNDP, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Food Programme and the World Bank.

36.19 As regards UNRWA, its strategy will be to continue to provide needed assistance to the Palestine refugees until their problem can be resolved in accordance with the relevant resolution of the General Assembly. That assistance involves the provision of essential education, health and relief and social services to eligible Palestine refugees living in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. The ability of the Agency to provide this assistance is entirely dependent on the annual provision of sufficient voluntarily contributed funds.

3. Subprogramme structure

36.20 The component of the programme relating to UNHCR includes five subprogrammes and the component of the programme relating to UNRWA includes one subprogramme, as follows:

International protection

Subprogramme 1. International instruments relating to the status of refugees or otherwise benefiting refugees

Subprogramme 2. Effective implementation of refugee rights

Subprogramme 3. Promotion and dissemination of principles of refugee law

Assistance

Subprogramme 4. Emergency response and relief, care and maintenance

Subprogramme 5. Durable solutions

UNRWA

Subprogramme 6. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

36.21 In view of the nature of the programme, no designation of priority between subprogrammes is proposed.

B. Subprogrammes

International protection

SUBPROGRAMME 1. INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES OR OTHERWISE BENEFITING REFUGEES

(a) Objectives

36.22 The legislative authority for subprogramme 1 derives from paragraph 8 (a) of the statute of UNHCR.

36.23 The number of States that have acceded to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees has steadily increased over the years to reach 106 in 1990. Further efforts are still required to promote the universal acceptance of those instruments. Eighteen States have acceded to the European Agreement of 20 April 1959 on the abolition of visas for refugees. Eight States have acceded to the European Agreement on the transfer of responsibility for refugees. While the accession rate to those instruments could be considered satisfactory, the increase in accessions to other instruments for example, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1957 Agreement relating to Refugee Seamen, has been very slow. There is thus a continued need to promote a wider acceptance by States both of the basic refugee instruments and other instruments and international conventions related to the protection of refugees.

36.24 With regard to the elaboration of further international instruments for the benefit of refugees, there is a continuing need for consultations between UNHCR and Governments. In addition, initiatives to include provisions favourable to refugees in general international instruments will need to be kept under constant review and appropriate action will have to be taken when the need arises. Those efforts should be assisted through the favourable climate as indicated in subprogramme 3.

36.25 The objectives of subprogramme 1 are the following:

(a) To promote further accessions to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees;

(b) To promote withdrawal of the geographical limitation and other reservations made by States upon becoming parties to the 1951 Convention;

(c) To promote accessions to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the 1957 Agreement and the 1973 Protocol relating to Refugee Seamen;

(d) To encourage further accessions by States to intergovernmental instruments adopted at the regional level in favour of refugees;

(e) To promote, especially at the regional level, the consideration and elaboration of other international instruments;

(f) To promote the inclusion of provisions favourable to refugees in general international instruments and in national legislation.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

36.26 The activities that will be undertaken are of a continuing nature and will include:

(a) Consultations on a continuing basis with Governments, at Headquarters and in the capitals, in order:

(i) To promote further accessions to the existing instruments mentioned above and, where applicable, the withdrawal of the geographical limitation and other reservations, stressing the advantages both to refugees and to the Governments themselves;

(ii) To discuss new and ongoing problems that affect refugees so as to ascertain whether steps could be taken to promote the elaboration of further international instruments in favour of refugees;

(b) Regular contacts with other intergovernmental organizations, continuing dialogue with the Secretariat and specialized agencies concerned with the preparation of international instruments with a view to the inclusion, as appropriate, of provisions favourable to refugees.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF REFUGEE RIGHTS

(a) Objectives

36.27 The legislative authority for subprogramme 2 derives from paragraph 8 of the statute of UNHCR, article 35 of the 1951 Convention and article II of the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

36.28 A number of States that are not parties to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees face large-scale influxes of refugees. UNHCR ensures the protection and material assistance to refugees under its mandate in those States. While a great number of States have adopted special legislation governing the status of refugees, many others have not yet done so. Thus, special efforts are required to encourage States to adopt legislation for the protection of refugees, to strengthen existing laws, policies and programmes in this regard and to ensure their full implementation.

36.29 At its thirty-ninth and fortieth sessions in 1988 and 1989, respectively, the Executive Committee of the UNHCR underlined in its Conclusions on refugee women, the interdependence of the problems and special needs of refugee women in regard to assistance, protection and durable solutions. It also called for the reinforcement of preventive measures and for strengthening by States and concerned agencies of their support of UNHCR protection activities relating to refugee women. As a result, guidelines have been issued to field offices directing them to identify the special needs of refugee women, particularly in the area of protection, and to encourage their involvement in addressing those needs, and a Senior Co-ordinator for Refugee Women has been recently appointed.

36.30 With regard to refugee children, both their number and their vulnerability cause them to be of special concern in the area of protection. Approximately half of the world's refugees are children below 18 years of age. Following the adoption by the Executive Committee at its thirty-eighth session in 1987 of Conclusions on refugee children, UNCHR has also prepared guidelines on refugee children, which set out their specific needs and problems, as well as the concrete steps to be taken to redress them.

36.31 The central objective of the subprogramme will continue to be to obtain the widest possible observance by States of internationally accepted standards for the treatment of refugees through the effective implementation of the provisions contained in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol together with efforts undertaken in accordance with subprogramme 1. Where refugee problems arise in countries not parties to either the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol, UNHCR action, based on the universal nature of the mandate of the Office, will be directed towards ensuring that refugees receive as favourable a legal status as possible, that they are treated in accordance with relevant principles of general

international law, including established principles of human rights, and that, at the minimum, they are protected against refoulement.

36.32 Other related objectives will aim at improving the protection of refugee women and refugee children. As regards refugee women, in addition to assuring their better protection the goal will be, in particular, to promote their participation, as agents as well as beneficiaries, in the planning and implementation of protection programmes. Concerning refugee children, the objective is to ensure that their special protection needs, especially those of unaccompanied minors, are given particular attention.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

36.33 The activities to be undertaken by UNHCR to achieve the objectives of the subprogramme will include the following:

(a) Promoting the adoption of adequate legislative and/or administrative measures concerning the granting of asylum and the observance of the principles of non-refoulement and encouraging liberal practice by Governments in regard to those matters;

(b) Monitoring, including through direct dialogue with Governments, the implementation by States of obligations assumed and responsibilities owed towards refugees on the basis of relevant international instruments and general principles of international law;

(c) Maintaining appropriate contacts with governmental and judicial authorities and providing adequate legal counselling and representation facilities so as to ensure that refugees are, in fact, able to benefit from the standards laid down in international instruments and from the relevant provisions of national legislation;

(d) Promoting, where necessary, the establishment by States of appropriate procedures for the determination of refugee status as defined by the relevant international instruments;

(e) Promoting the adoption of the necessary legislative and/or administrative measures to give effect to the standards for the treatment of refugees defined in the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol and in other relevant international instruments and the adoption, where necessary, of legislative and/or administrative measures favourable to refugees in those States which have not yet become parties to those instruments;

(f) Promoting internal legislative and/or administrative measures favourable to the acquisition by refugees of the nationality of their country of permanent residence;

(g) Developing a policy framework and organizational work plan for the next stages in the mainstreaming within UNHCR of refugee women's protection issues. Particular attention will be paid to the need for field personnel to facilitate participation of refugee women, revising and expanding the existing internal guidelines relating to the international protection of refugee women, and developing training materials and courses to increase awareness of the specific

protection needs of refugee women and to encourage the involvement of non-governmental organizations in this exercise;

(h) Disseminating the "Guidelines on refugee children" and the implementation of a specific work plan that will focus in particular on their protection needs; seeking the active co-operation and collaboration of Governments, other United Nations bodies, among them the United Nations Children's Fund, non-governmental organizations and refugees themselves, in the implementation of the Guidelines and the work plan; increasing public awareness of the situation and needs of refugee children; and developing training materials to improve the capacity and effectiveness of field personnel in identifying and addressing the protection as well as other needs of refugee children.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. PROMOTION AND DISSEMINATION OF PRINCIPLES OF REFUGEE LAW

(a) Objectives

36.34 The legislative authority for subprogramme 3 derives from article 8 (a) of the statute of UNHCR.

36.35 Although there has been an increased awareness of refugee problems, further efforts are still required to disseminate as widely as possible information concerning those problems and knowledge of refugee law, particularly in view of the recent large-scale influxes and intercontinental movements of refugees. In addition, with the progressive development of refugee law as a branch of international law, it is important to promote further the teaching of refugee law and international protection principles as a field of academic study.

36.36 The objectives of the subprogramme are the following:

(a) To promote an increased understanding of the special position of refugees;

(b) To create a climate of opinion favourable to the strengthening of their legal status;

(c) To promote a wider knowledge of the principles of international protection, with particular emphasis on the refugee law training of officials of Governments and non-govenmental organizations.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

36.37 Taking into account the positive impact of the workshop and seminars held over the past years and their usefulness in ensuring that government officials, who are vital components in the implementation of international refugee law, have a full understanding of the basic principles of international protection, and that in application of those principles the highest standards are observed, similar workshops and seminars will continue to be organized during the plan period. Special priority will be given to the organization of training workshops for government officials who are concerned with the legal or protection aspects of refugee problems, particularly in those States which have more recently or not yet become parties to the international refugee instruments. Although the periodicity of such training workshops cannot readily be determined in advance, as this will depend upon the co-operation with the national authorities concerned, several workshops per year are envisaged in each region, at both the regional and national

levels. Bearing in mind the number and frequency of seminars held recently for the in-depth examination of new legal problems in the field of international protection or for the review and development of existing standards, it is envisaged that at least four such seminars would be organized during the plan period.

36.38 Information on the legal difficulties confronting refugees and on the principles of international protection will be disseminated through the printing and distribution of publications in the field of refugee law and through articles in newspapers and academic journals as well as through participation in conferences, seminars and public debates on refugee questions. Collaboration with other United Nations bodies, particularly in the human rights field, will be strengthened with a view to sharing ideas, information, experiences and documentation, as well as joining in their promotion and dissemination programmes and sensitizing them to refugee problems in their spheres of responsibility. Co-operation with non-governmental organizations will also be strengthened in order to stimulate and strengthen their interest in refugee law and international protection. Joint efforts in training refugee advocacy lawyers and other refugee law practitioners will be particularly important in this respect. That collaboration will further manifest itself in the establishment and use of data bases covering international and national legislation and case law. Consultations will be held with ministries of education and officials of institutions of higher learning with a view to promoting the introduction of courses on refugee law in the curricula of those institutions as well as the inclusion of the human rights of refugees into the social studies curriculum.

Assistance

SUBPROGRAMME 4. EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RELIEF, CARE AND MAINTENANCE

(a) Objectives

36.39 The legislative authority for subprogramme 4 derives from article I of the statute of UNHCR and General Assembly resolutions 1166 (XII), 2956 (b) (XXVII), 3271 B (XXIX), 35/41 B, 42/108 and 44/137.

36.40 The problems addressed in the subprogramme embrace refugees in an initial emergency influx and those in ongoing refugee situations. In the first category there are the large numbers of asylum-seekers, either individuals or groups, who have been forced to flee from their countries of origin. Overall in 1988-1989, new emergencies in Africa, Asia and South-East Asia added a further 700,000 people to the UNHCR caseload. Usually those people leave in a condition of severe personal and family deprivation, including loss or separation of family members, property and means of livelihood, and therefore find themselves in destitute conditions in countries of first asylum. The provision of basic relief assistance to such persons, with special attention given to the specific needs of women and children, is thus of paramount importance in the initial phase of a refugee crisis. After the emergency phase has passed, the role of UNHCR is to provide ongoing care and maintenance to refugees while searching for durable solutions to their situation. Such ongoing assistance may include the provision of food, transportation, shelter, water, health services, sanitation, clothing, household utensils and basic education. Whenever feasible, programmes also include vocational training or small income-generating activities to prepare refugees for a more productive life and promote a reasonable degree of self-reliance. The goal, then, is greater refugee

participation in programmes aimed at self-sufficiency and preparations for the anticipated durable solutions. In those programmes, the potential contribution of refugee women as agents in their planning and implementation needs to be emphasized.

36.41 In the field of care and maintenance, UNHCR is implementing large programmes in Ethiopia, Malawi and Somalia. The largest single care and maintenance programme remains, however, that for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Included in the programme is a substantial component of income-generating and self-sufficiency activities. At the end of 1988, there were some 156,000 Indo-Chinese asylum-seekers receiving care and maintenance in UNHCR-assisted camps in South-East Asia. The dramatic upsurge in the arrival of Vietnamese asylum-seekers in the territory of Hong Kong and in countries in South-East Asia during the first six months of 1989 created an alarming situation that necessitated the search for a new approach. With no prospects of local integration, that caseload created unprecedented problems in protection and assistance. The International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees, held in June 1989, agreed on a Comprehensive Plan of Action. In Latin America, substantial care and maintenance programmes are operating in Honduras and Mexico. In Europe, large numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees in Greece, Italy, Turkey and Yugoslavia continue to require the provision of care and maintenance while awaiting the attainment of a durable solution.

36.42 The objectives of the subprogramme fall into two general categories:

(a) To provide relief to refugees in emergency situations and, especially, to focus on the particular needs of women and children, and to promote greater efficiency and effectiveness of emergency preparedness and response to new refugee situations, or to participate, at the invitation of the Secretary-General, in special humanitarian operations for which UNHCR has particular expertise and experience;

(b) To promote the development and implementation of intermediate assistance measures, pending the identification of durable solutions, with the ultimate aim of enabling refugee groups and individuals to become self-supporting in the country of first asylum. In this way, the need for prolonged care and maintenance programmes is contained and the financial burden on the host Government, and on the international community at large, is reduced.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

36.43 The strategy will consist of the following activities:

(a) Improvment and streamlining of existing in-house emergency procedures, work methods, and systems applicable to emergency response;

(b) Development and implementation of a UNHCR emergency staffing roster to facilitate rapid deployment of staff to sites of emergency influxes;

(c) Development and utilization of a kit for registration and commodity distribution;

(d) Continued provision of emergency management training to staff of UNHCR, participating Governments and non-governmental organizations acting as implementing partners, and the improvement of core materials for the Emergency Management Training Programme;

(e) In the field of early warning improvement of early warning mechanisms and systems at the field level and for the advancement of inter-agency co-ordination;

(f) Establishment of an emergency stockpile that will allow the rapid shipment of the most commonly needed relief items to the emergency location;

(g) Preparation by all field offices of a "refugee contingency plan" according to a new format prepared at Headquarters;

(h) Provision of assistance for the continued development of national disaster plans that include refugee components for southern Africa and other regions;

(i) Systematic utilization of the "Supplies and Food Aid Field Handbook" in the planning and implementation of logistics and transport systems in emergency operations;

(j) Promotion of the active involvement of refugees in the provision of emergency assistance and in the development of appropriate self-help measures;

(k) Systematic evaluation, including "lessons learned" surveys, of all major refugee emergencies;

(l) In relation to refugee women, further development of the policy framework and organizational work plan for the next stages in the mainstreaming of refugee women's issues within UNHCR;

(m) Wider dissemination of the "Guidelines on refugee children" and the implementation of a related work plan;

(n) Revision of the "UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies", which will highlight the particular needs of refugee women and children;

(o) Provision of care and maintenance, which involves not only the provision of the types of assistance listed above but also related strategies. This involves raising the necessary financial resources for the General Programme or by appeals for Special Programmes and, in addition, identifying those assistance tasks which might be undertaken in whole or in part by other bodies of the United Nations system and other international organizations. It also involves negotiating an agreed division of responsibilities and arrangements for financing those activities, while at the same time safeguarding the ability of the High Commissioner to exercise fully his mission of protection;

(p) Monitoring the implementation of care and maintenance projects and assessing their impact on the target beneficiaries, especially women and children.

SUBPROGRAMME 5. DURABLE SOLUTIONS

36.44 The legislative authority for subprogramme 5 derives from article I of the statute of UNHCR; and General Assembly resolutions 35/42, 37/197, 42/108 and 44/137.

36.45 The most appropriate durable solution to the refugee problem continues to be voluntary repatriation. UNHCR has recently facilitated the voluntary return to their country of origin of a number of refugee groups, particularly Burundis,

Chadians, Ethiopians, Guatemalans, Laotians, Mozambicans, Namibians, Nicaraguans, Salvadorians, Ugandans, Vietnamese and Zimbabweans. Voluntary repatriation usually requires some basic assistance to satisfy the immediate needs of returnees and short-term rehabilitation and reconstruction initiatives to enable the returnees to obtain a standard of living and self-sufficiency comparable to that of the local population. In addition, long-term development assistance may be needed in the country of origin to facilitate the reintegration of returnees. The restoration or creation of a basic infrastructure in the country of origin may not only be essential but also act as a catalyst for repatriation. Appropriate development type projects and initiatives, implemented by the host Government with development agencies support and appropriate UNHCR involvement, aim at facilitating the integration of returnees in their country of origin.

36.46 As long as voluntary repatriation is not possible, local integration in the country of first asylum is the next preferred durable solution. This implies, however, a full integration (legal, social, economic) of the refugee in the host country. UNHCR generally assists the host countries in identifying, appraising, planning and developing local integration schemes, both rural and urban, the ultimate objective being to create socio-economically viable communities where refugees can meet their basic needs and fully integrate into local economies. The High Commissioner has placed continued emphasis over the past years on an assessment of the viability and efficiency of such programmes in order to optimize the allocation and use of resources made available by the international community for the benefit of refugees. Over the past decade, local integration expenditures have constituted a substantial part of the UNHCR assistance programme.

36.47 Resettlement in third countries continues to be the durable solution for individual refugees or refugee groups for whom neither voluntary repatriation nor local integration in the country of first asylum will guarantee a secure, stable and dignified future. The criteria for seeking resettlement, therefore, derive not only from conditions in the country of origin but also from conditions in the country of first asylum. Some countries permit temporary asylum on condition that resettlement to a third country will be undertaken immediately or as soon as possible. Even where this is not the case, ethnic, political or economic reasons may render local integration impossible, thus necessitating efforts to find a solution in a third country. Of the three durable solutions, resettlement invariably involves the greatest upheaval and poses the greatest challenge in readjustment terms for the individuals concerned. In 1988, a total of 111,056 individuals were resettled through UNHCR interventions. An increase has, however, been noted in resettlement needs in the past few years and this trend, regrettably, shows few signs of abating in the immediate future. Particular attention was focused, in 1989 and 1990, on expanded efforts to resolve the Indo-Chinese refugee phenomenon in the context of a Comprehensive Plan of Action drawn up at the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees, held at Geneva on 13 and 14 June 1989.

36.48 Possibilities of resettlement assistance for women-at-risk increased during 1988. Certain resettlement countries now seek to offer priority to refugee women who are found to be facing particular hardships. Through such arrangements, women who would otherwise be ineligible for resettlement should be able to obtain admission and enhanced support for their integration on arrival in the resettlement country.

36.49 The continued presence during the past decade of large-scale refugee populations in developing countries of asylum has created developmental assistance needs that go beyond immediate relief for both refugees and refugee hosting areas. Moreover, voluntary repatriation into the developing countries of origin needs to be facilitated by developmental efforts in those areas to which refugees returned. The High Commissioner has played a catalyst role in co-operating with developing agencies to complement ongoing assistance or in phasing-out his assistance once durable solutions have been reached. During the period 1992-1997, challenges will, inter alia, include more concerted and co-ordinated action by the international community to assure a linkage between refugee aid and development assistance, and the adoption of mechanisms by refugee hosting countries to include refugee related projects in their development plans, while assuring that in the financing of development plans and programmes, the concept of additionality of funds in view of a refugee presence is respected by the donor community.

36.50 The objectives of the subprogramme are to promote the durable solutions of voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement and, in relation to the two preferred solutions of voluntary repatriation and local integration, to encourage an appropriate contribution on the part of development agencies to assuring those two durable solutions. More particularly, in relation to linking the contribution of development agencies to assuring durable solutions to refugee situations, the objectives of UNHCR will be as follows:

(a) To identify and rank by priority, in co-ordination with development agencies and host Governments, appropriate development type projects and initiatives that, when implemented by the host Government with development agency support and appropriate UNHCR involvement, would contribute to the effectiveness of solutions through voluntary repatriation and local integration of refugee problems, or, pending the finding of a durable solution, that would help in safeguarding the practice of temporary refuge or would repair ecological damage to a country that had resulted from a refugee presence;

(b) To encourage the international community and relevant United Nations bodies as well as other international organizations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, to take into consideration the situation of those countries which have for many years received a large number of refugees and, in particular, to study the possibility of using that factor as a criterion for additional funding.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

36.51 As regards the identification and promotion of voluntary repatriation solutions, the strategy will consist of (a) consultations and the establishment of mutually agreeable procedures with the authorities of the countries concerned and with the refugees themselves, and (b) provision of material assistance (payment of travel costs and initial settlement measures in the country of origin) to refugees who wish to be repatriated.

36.52 In the search for solutions through local integration, where the possibility exists, UNHCR will assist host countries in identifying, appraising, planning and developing local rural and urban settlement schemes, the ultimate objective being to assist refugees so that their basic needs can be met and so that they can thus be fully integrated into local communities. This strategy implies close co-operation and co-ordination between UNHCR and relevant development agencies and non-governmental organizations as well as with the host Government to assure that

such development initiatives undertaken in support of local integration are consistent with national development plans.

36.53 In relation to resettlement, the strategy will consist of carrying out consultations with Governments and international and national organizations in establishing refugee resettlement quotas and in preparing and arranging the movement of refugees to countries of permanent asylum, and of assessing the professional and socio-economic potential of the refugees to be resettled in order to facilitate their integration in resettlement countries.

36.54 The strategy for assuring a linkage between development assistance and the search for durable solutions to refugee situations, especially through voluntary repatriation and local integration, will consist of (a) gathering reliable information on the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons and on the basic socio-economic and political conditions of developing hosting countries; (b) strengthening information sharing and support mechanisms; (c) assisting in the formulation of action programmes in consultation with specialized development agencies and the concerned national authorities that take into account the national development priorities of the host countries and the technical advice of other members of the United Nations system, the World Bank, intergovernmental or governmental development agencies; (d) assisting in the mobilization of the necessary financial resources and in-kind contributions; (e) undertaking the identification, preparation and formulation of possible refugee-related development projects by host Governments, development agencies and non-governmental organizations, with appropriate UNHCR involvement; (f) collaborating especially with agencies whose target beneficiaries are the poorest in rural and urban areas and among whom are to be found refugees; and (g) improving and enhancing the monitoring of refugee related development programmes and projects, including evaluation of them to assess the relevance, effectiveness and impact on refugees with a view to improving them as necessary.

UNRWA

SUBPROGRAMME 6. UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST

(a) Objectives

36.55 The legislative authority for subprogramme 6 derives from General Assembly resolutions 302 (IV) and 44/47 A.

36.56 Subject to the availability of funds, the Agency plans to continue to provide refugees with the following services:

(a) Education services to meet the basic educational needs of Palestine refugees and to enhance their educational opportunities;

(b) Health services to meet the refugees' basic health needs and improve their overall state of health;

(c) Relief and social services to assist refugees in meeting their needs, in maintaining a reasonable standard of existence and in improving their capacity to become more self-reliant, thereby reducing their dependence on such assistance.

(b) Course of action by the Agency

36.57 The education service will continue to provide general, higher, teacher and vocational/technical education for Palestine refugee children in accordance with their needs and consistent with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) standards. The Agency will continue efforts to improve the quality of teaching, training and staff development and to rely on UNESCO for technical expertise and support. Major planned actions are directed at (a) meeting the natural growth in the school population by providing the necessary school facilities and teaching staff and (b) improving the quality of teaching, training, physical and manpower facilities, as well as the level of staff competence.

36.58 The health service will continue to provide eligible refugees with essential health services consistent with the basic principles and the global strategies of the World Health Organization (WHO). The Agency attaches great importance to increasing community participation and strengthening inter-departmental as well as inter-agency co-operation. The latter will involve continued reliance on WHO for technical expertise and support of the programme. Major planned actions are directed at (a) improving and expanding health infrastructure for diagnostic and support facilities, (b) improving maternal health care and (c) strengthening and expanding the new community health programme involving family health assessment and follow-up so that it will cover all refugee camps.

36.59 The relief and social services will continue to provide support to the neediest among the Palestine refugees and to facilitate self-reliance. The Agency will focus on ways in which that might be achieved through appropriate support to the destitute in the area of skill development, programmes for women that are directed towards an increase in income-earning potential, skill-training courses, especially for unemployed youth and women, consolidation of self-support with income-generating projects, and professional training for social workers and other relief services staff to facilitate the above processes. Major planned actions are directed at (a) reducing dependence on material assistance through the actualization of capabilities, for example, skill training and income generating projects, and (b) professional social work as well as programmes for women, unemployed youth, and the disabled.

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PROPOSED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997*

MAJOR PROGRAMME VII. HUMAN RIGHTS, FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

Programme 37. Disaster relief and mitigation, and special emergency programmes

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
A.	Programme	37.1 - 37.16	2
	1. General orientation	37.1 - 37.9	2
	2. Overall strategy	37.10 - 37.14	3
	3. Subprogramme structure and priorities	37.15 - 37.16	5
B.	Subprogrammes	37.17 - 37.42	6
	1. Disaster relief co-ordination	37.17 - 37.22	6
	2. Disaster mitigation	37.23 - 37.29	7
	3. Disaster information	37.30 - 37.38	9
	4. Special emergency programmes	37.39 - 37.42	11

* The present document contains programme 37 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The complete medium-term plan will subsequently be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1).

PROGRAMME 37. DISASTER RELIEF AND MITIGATION, AND SPECIAL EMERGENCY PROGRAMMES

A. Programme

1. General orientation

37.1 The general mandate for the programme derives from the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Articles 1 and 55, which refer to international co-operation in solving problems of an economic and humanitarian character.

37.2 More directly, the legislative authority on disaster relief and mitigation derives from General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI) of 14 December 1971, by which the Assembly established the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and provided its basic terms of reference, as well as subsequent resolutions of the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Most recently, the Assembly adopted resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989, by which it proclaimed the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and adopted the International Framework of Action for the Decade.

37.3 The legislative authority for the special emergency programmes stems from the resolutions adopted annually by the General Assembly, in which it has requested the Secretary-General to co-ordinate the provision of humanitarian aid and assistance to a substantial number of countries in Africa. Those programmes are usually called for or set up in response to complex emergency situations that involve multiple factors and include sensitive political issues and that frequently require the Secretary-General to co-ordinate the related efforts of organizations of the United Nations system and of organizations outside the system.

37.4 The objectives of the programme are:

(a) To assist the authorities of disaster-stricken countries with their national efforts;

(b) To mobilize, co-ordinate and deliver international emergency assistance to victims of natural disasters or of other disorders caused by civil strife;

(c) To reduce through concerted international action, especially in the developing countries, the loss of life, property damage, and social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters and other calamities of natural origin.

37.5 Disaster relief and mitigation are not only fundamental humanitarian tasks aimed at assisting victims of disasters and at minimizing the loss of life and property, they are also increasingly recognized as important components of overall development efforts. In a number of countries, economic and social growth have suffered severe set-backs because of the occurrence of disasters, and in some cases several years of progress have been totally annihilated.

37.6 While humanity has always had to live with natural hazards, the vulnerability of populations to disasters is increasing. Human settlements and industrial activities are both moving into previously unpopulated, high-risk areas, thus greatly increasing the number of people and the amount of property imperilled by a single disaster. Continued human interference in the natural processes controlling

the environment can cause serious disturbances, which assume the character of disasters, such as drought, floods and insect plagues.

37.7 The effectiveness of relief activities depends to a certain extent on the intrinsic features of each disaster and on the adequacy of the national response. However, given the increasing vulnerability of economies, there is a growing need to mobilize external assistance from the international community and to improve co-ordination and co-operation in order to render those international relief efforts more effective. The call for more expertise and the use of advanced communications technology have become imperative. Well co-ordinated and expedient disaster relief, including search and rescue operations, timely transportation and distribution of essential supplies and emergency health assistance, can significantly reduce the loss of life.

37.8 Another important aspect of the problem to which the programme will devote particular attention concerns disaster preparedness and prevention, including the development of early warning systems. Capacity for the evaluation of risks is still largely incomplete in many developing countries, thus allowing disasters to continue occurring and progressively increasing in magnitude. This situation results from a lack of disaster mitigation infrastructure in those countries. Also, it is difficult to obtain financing from potential donors for disaster mitigation programmes in developing countries; such programmes do not appeal as strongly to donors as do requests that they receive for immediate assistance in the wake of the disaster.

37.9 Special emergency programmes are set up to handle, in specific countries and on a national scale, complex emergency situations characterized by civil strife, the presence of large numbers of displaced persons and varying degrees of famine. Such characteristics distinguish them from those situations which fall within the mandate of a single organization of the United Nations system, such as food shortages (World Food Programme), epidemics (World Health Organization), child health (United Nations Children's Emergency Fund), locust depredations (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) or refugees (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Though the extent and nature of future emergencies or outbreaks of civil strife cannot be predicted with certainty, the historical record suggests that situations will arise that will lead Governments to call for new emergency programmes.

2. Overall strategy

37.10 The programme components dealing with disaster relief, mitigation and information will be implemented by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), in accordance with its mandate and the pertinent provisions contained in the International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, annexed to General Assembly resolution 44/236. The other component of the programme dealing with special emergency programmes in Africa will be implemented by the Unit for Special Emergency Programmes in the Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship.

37.11 The activities to be carried out by UNDRO may be summarized as follows:

(a) Regarding disaster relief co-ordination, UNDRO will continue to assist the Government of a stricken country, upon its request, in providing an appropriate national response, in mobilizing and co-ordinating international relief efforts and by serving as a clearing house for related activities and information. In most cases, UNDRO launches, on behalf of the Secretary-General, an international appeal for assistance. Activities include on-site assessment of damage and needs, if necessary by multi-agency assessment missions, as well as provision of timely and reliable information on relief requirements and available assistance. In carrying out its co-ordinating role, UNDRO will aim at supporting, stimulating and orienting the relief activities of United Nations organizations directly concerned and eliciting the greatest possible co-operation from donor agencies and voluntary organizations. Every effort will be made to avoid duplication of efforts or provision of inadequate assistance;

(b) In disaster mitigation (preparedness and prevention), the role of UNDRO is, to a large extent, promotional and advisory, fully taking into account the expertise and facilities available within the United Nations system and in the academic and research fields. However, recent trends such as recognition of the benefits of related strategies, as expressed in the proclamation of the Decade, have led to a new emphasis on this area of UNDRO activities. In close co-operation with the Decade secretariat, and benefiting from the increasing support of Member States, it is envisaged that the disaster mitigation activities of UNDRO will be intensified during the plan period. In particular, UNDRO will increase its assistance to Governments in devising and implementing comprehensive disaster mitigation programmes, which should be closely linked to national development plans. Similarly, UNDRO will emphasize the inclusion of disaster mitigation measures in development projects, where applicable.

37.12 The implementation of special emergency programmes dealing with complex emergencies in Africa may require at times the establishment of special institutional arrangements, such as the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa. In most cases, however, they are co-ordinated through the inter-agency African Emergency Task Force, whose members represent those agencies which are extensively involved in the various emergency situations in Africa. Usually, the strategy involves the following activities: an appeal by the Secretary-General to the donor community for the provision of emergency assistance; the dispatch of an inter-agency mission for the assessment of specific and priority needs in the affected country; the provision of advisory services to the authorities of the country, upon request; the preparation of an appeal document on the basis of the inter-agency assessment mission; reporting to the General Assembly and to donor countries, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations; periodic meetings with donor Governments and non-governmental organizations; and holding regular inter-agency meetings in order to exchange information and to review those problems and issues which need to be addressed in order to improve co-ordination of the emergency assistance work of the organizations concerned. Co-ordination addresses, in particular, the issues of agreed assessments of needs in affected countries, harmonization of system-wide policies in complex emergency operations, forecasting potential emergency situations, planning preparedness measures, and exchanging information on pledges and contributions.

37.13 Co-operation and co-ordination are essential conditions for implementation of the programme. UNDRO and the Unit for Special Emergency Programmes in the Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship co-operate very closely and extensively with each other, and with

the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the field level. Particular mention should be made of the joint UNDRO/UNDP disaster management activities. Both UNDRO and the Department maintain active co-operation and co-ordination with the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation and the Department of Public Information. They also co-operate closely with other organizations of the United Nations system through the two pertinent inter-organizational co-ordinating arrangements established within the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. UNDRO is the focal point for the Inter-Agency Consultations on Disaster Management which has the following members: UNDRO, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, International Labour Organisation (ILO), FAO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), WHO, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), International Maritime Oganization (IMO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and International Atomic Energy Agency. The Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Co-operation, Decolonization and Trusteeship is the Chairman of the African Emergency Task Force, which has the following members: UNDRO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, FAO and WHO. Both UNDRO and the Unit for Special Emergency Programmes maintain close co-operation with relevant national emergency services, donor Governments and agencies and non-governmental organizations.

37.14 As regards the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade, the General Assembly, in its resolution 44/236, recalled the specific responsibilities and functions of UNDRO in the field of disaster prevention and preparedness, and assigned the role of overseeing and co-ordinating the programmes and activities of the United Nations system to the Director-General for Development and International Economic Co-operation, in close co-operation with UNDRO and the secretariat of the Decade, which is responsible for the day-to-day co-ordination of the Decade activities. In its disaster mitigation activities, UNDRO also co-operates closely with the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development.

3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

37.15 Based on the objectives, orientation and strategy outlined above, the programme comprises the following four subprogrammes:

Subprogramme 1. Disaster relief co-ordination

Subprogramme 2. Disaster mitigation

Subprogramme 3. Disaster information

Subprogramme 4. Special emergency programmes

37.16 Highest priority will be given to subprogrammes 1 (Disaster relief co-ordination) and 2 (Disaster mitigation).

B. Subprogrammes

SUBPROGRAMME 1. DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATION

(a) Objectives

37.17 The most recent legislative authority for the subprogramme is General Assembly resolution 41/201, paragraphs 4, 6, 8 and 10, and resolution 43/204, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3.

37.18 The extent of destruction caused by a disaster may be such that the affected country or locality requires immediate external aid in order to restore normal living conditions, or it may be that foreign resources and expertise may be required to complement national relief efforts.

37.19 In those instances, Governments of disaster-stricken countries need specialized assistance to launch and develop a concerted international relief response. Prospective donors must be informed by the fastest means of the damage sustained and of the actual needs in a stricken area as well as of the measures being taken to meet them, so that appropriate aid can reach victims in the shortest time possible. With the technological advancement of communications and the growing awareness of the global public, the international response to disasters has widened the scope for relief efforts. The increasing number of donors, particularly in the non-governmental sector, is expected to render the task of co-ordinating international relief more essential and complex.

37.20 If international aid is not well co-ordinated and donors are not kept informed of other contributions, inadequate supplies may be sent to the disaster site, thereby causing congestion while urgent needs of the victims remain unmet. Lack of on-site co-ordination, as well as inadequate technical knowledge of relief procedures, could hinder the effective implementation of multilateral relief operations.

37.21 Thus, the objectives of the subprogramme are to assist the authorities of disaster-stricken countries with their national response and to mobilize and co-ordinate international relief assistance to victims. Those objectives are to be achieved if and when disasters occur and in the light of prevailing circumstances.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

37.22 During the period, the following course of action will be undertaken:

(a) On-site assessment of damage and needs, if necessary, by multi-agency assessment missions;

(b) Provision to the international community of timely, accurate and regularly adjusted assessments of needs and of systematically updated records of contributions balanced against relief requirements;

(c) Organization of international meetings and unified appeals for concerted relief programmes, taking into account the mandates and functions of United Nations organizations and of governmental and non-governmental relief agencies;

(d) Rapid and cost-effective collection and broad dissemination of information related to disasters and relief operations through advanced communications technology;

(e) Provision of assistance to national authorities for search and rescue operations, relief co-ordination, supply logistics and distribution of relief materials at the disaster site;

(f) Granting direct assistance in the form of resources and expertise to a disaster-stricken country in order to meet priority emergency needs;

(g) Supporting the efforts of authorities in donor countries in the co-ordination of governmental and non-governmental responses to disasters abroad;

(h) Strengthening co-operation with UNDP, notably at the country level, and with other United Nations organizations in all phases of a disaster, including the transition from relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction;

(i) Undertaking post-disaster evaluations of international relief operations for use by concerned authorities and as learning instruments for application in future disasters;

(j) Supporting relief efforts of special emergency programmes in major and complex disasters;

(k) Supporting efforts of concerned United Nations organizations providing assistance to affected countries in reducing the impact of industrial, chemical and nuclear disasters;

(l) Pursuing consultations and meetings with the disaster management community (emergency services in donor and recipient countries, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations), institutions and the media in order to enhance international response to disasters;

(m) Undertaking research on disaster relief issues and creating databases on disaster related information and available resources and skills;

(n) Undertaking evaluations of international relief operations, sharing results thereof with concerned authorities and following up on the experiences drawn for application in future disasters.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. DISASTER MITIGATION

(a) Objectives

37.23 The legislative authority for the subprogramme is General Assembly resolutions 41/201, paragraphs 3 and 5; 43/204, paragraph 2; and 44/236, annex, paragraphs 5, 9 and 14; and Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/51, paragraphs 3 and 4.

37.24 Disaster mitigation is a long and painstaking process. Its success is difficult to assess in terms of indicators, for successful mitigation is ideally a succession of non-events, that is, the absence of damage or socio-economic disruption.

37.25 In most disaster-prone developing countries there is a lack of disaster mitigation infrastructure; there is a shortage of trained personnel at administrative and technical levels and of the necessary resources and expertise to promote mitigation at all stages of pre-investment and investment activities in disaster-prone areas. Also, it is difficult to obtain financing from the donor community for disaster mitigation programmes; such programmes do not appeal as strongly to the donors as do requests that they receive for immediate assistance in the wake of a disaster. Without adequate preparedness and prevention measures, however, disasters will continue to occur and their impact will increase in severity.

37.26 Within the overall objective and goals of the Decade contained in the International Framework of Action, the objective of the subprogramme is to assist and advise concerned Governments, at their request, on the policies and measures that can be taken in advance of a disaster in order to reduce its impact. In providing its assistance and advice, UNDRO will emphasize, in particular, the development and application of the following policies and measures:

(a) Identification of prevailing hazards and assessment of their frequency of occurrence for different levels of magnitude;

(b) Estimation of risk, that is, the human and material losses that can be expected from given disaster scenarios, and the formulation of strategies to include those risks or to provide early warning of their likely occurrence;

(c) Formulation, and implementation, in certain cases, of comprehensive disaster mitigation policies and programmes;

(d) Creation of governmental and institutional structures responsible for disaster mitigation and management;

(e) Exchange of information and dissemination of knowledge at the regional or subregional level;

(f) Training of those responsible for the technical and organizational aspects of disaster mitigation.

37.27 Those policies and measures are set out in their logical sequence. If countries have advanced in certain areas, assistance will be provided in filling the gaps identified in others. Furthermore, in view of the magnitude of the problems, while some of the policies and measures can be implemented during the medium-term, others will need a longer period.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

37.28 Disaster mitigation techniques have in recent years become better defined, more comprehensive, and therefore more widely applicable. As it has done in the past, UNDRO will continue to contribute to the further development and refinement of those techniques and to diffuse them widely by preparing compendia and manuals, organizing training seminars and carrying out technical co-operation projects at the national and regional levels. Such technical co-operation activities will include the provision of technical expertise, the exchange of experience between disaster-prone developing countries, especially within the same region, the provision of training and granting of fellowships. Financial resources for such

activities will be sought from UNDP, regional development agencies and interested donor countries and organizations. In carrying out the activities under its mandate, as well as those which will be carried out in close association with the secretariat of the Decade, UNDRO will take fully into account the new interest and support for disaster mitigation activities generated by the Decade, and expected to be expressed through the mobilization of additional financial resources.

37.29 Within that context, the strategy will emphasize the following:

(a) Developing a very close co-operation with the secretariat of the Decade and pooling available resources by developing projects in common, identifying and/or evaluating projects for possible inclusion in the programme of the Decade, executing projects during the Decade, as appropriate, and assisting in fund-raising;

(b) Working closely with UNDP at the field level and formalizing arrangements initiated by the UNDRO/UNDP Task Force to introduce disaster mitigation systematically into the UNDP country and regional/interregional programmes;

(c) Evaluating research findings in hazard assessment and monitoring and promoting their application;

(d) Undertaking studies of past disaster losses as a guide to the evaluation of future risks;

(e) Describing those scenarios which are more likely to portray future risk and preparing work programmes for the step-by-step application of disaster mitigation techniques as a function of such scenarios;

(f) Developing the most effective procedures for issuing warnings, determining evacuation criteria and managing evacuations;

(g) Elaborating methods for post-disaster search and rescue;

(h) Providing guidance on emergency shelter provision.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. DISASTER INFORMATION

(a) Objectives

37.30 The legislative authority for the subprogramme is General Assembly resolutions 41/201, paragraph 6, and 43/204, paragraph 1.

37.31 Decisions on the type and extent of the international response to sudden disasters are based on many factors and vary between and within the main categories of actors involved (Governments of affected countries, organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, donor Governments and non-governmental organizations).

37.32 The more accurate, complete and timely the information available, the higher the quality of the response is likely to be. That information may be hard to get, hard to communicate and hard to distribute to the right decision makers, in the right place, at the right time. In some instances the problem is compounded by a breakdown in communications systems between the capital of the stricken country and

UNDRO in Geneva. In such cases, UNDRO has to use, among other sources, information provided by third parties such as reliable amateur radio clubs.

37.33 UNDRO in Geneva, in tandem with UNDP at the field level and through the use of available telecommunication systems, attempts to communicate the available information, partly through consultations and co-ordination meetings at the national and international levels, partly by telephone, and chiefly through the UNDRO Situation Reports (SITREPS), which are also reproduced on the United Nations International Emergency Network. The periodic transmissions of summaries from Geneva can but partially meet the needs of international relief management - notably with respect to real-time or near real-time calculations and dissemination of relief needs as balanced against contributions from multiple sources acting almost simultaneously in a limited time-frame.

37.34 Confusion, uncertainties and delays in international response may also arise if insufficient or inadequate information is available on national policies and capacities as well as on arrangements and mechanisms to request, receive and distribute international assistance.

37.35 In order to enable most of the disaster-prone countries to elaborate and implement disaster mitigation programmes, they need in particular to be provided with information on a wide range of issues, including available expertise and financial resources and appropriate guidelines and strategies for applying existing scientific and technical knowledge. Information on many of those issues, however, is still fragmentary (especially with respect to disaster statistics) and dispersed so that it is difficult for UNDRO to respond effectively and promptly to requests from Governments or to ensure that technical co-operation programmes can be supported by the necessary information. The need to deal with this problem is one of the main goals of the Decade.

37.36 Although the disaster management community world wide is small, it is highly specialized and dispersed. Communications and the transfer of information and knowledge between its members may be non-existent, slow, uncertain and costly. There may also be duplication of programmes, ignorance in one place of successful initiatives in another, including a lack of knowledge of the technical assistance and awareness-raising activities of UNDRO.

37.37 Taking into those problems and the goals of the Decade, the objective of the subprogramme is to enhance the capabilities of UNDRO to identify, collect, analyse and disseminate information that is timely, accurate and useful to disaster managers, to policy and decision-makers concerned with disaster management and, to a limited extent, to the general public. This is expected, more specifically, to have the following results:

(a) To facilitate action and co-ordination between all the actors involved in disaster relief and mitigation operations and activities;

(b) To reduce to a minimum waste, duplication and the incidence of unmet needs in the international relief provided in a disaster situation;

(c) To carry out meaningful technical co-operation projects and to provide sound advice on relative degrees of disaster proneness and measures to be taken in consequence;

(d) To allow for fruitful transfer of knowledge and technology on disaster management policies, techniques, practices and technical tools;

(e) To serve as reliable sources and points of referral on specialized expertise, resources, equipment, institutions, national and international officials, legislation and plans.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

37.38 Under this subprogramme, UNDRO will provide technical support for subprogrammes 1 and 2. In addition to working closely with the secretariat of the Decade, UNDRO will undertake the following activities:

(a) Introduction of new or existing communications technologies that will provide real-time or near real-time identification of needs, contributions and activities undertaken between multiple points internationally. In this context, the content, facilities and membership of the United Nations International Emergency Network will be further developed so that a greater proportion of the disaster management community can exchange information more easily and economically using that medium;

(b) Maintenance of updated registers of disaster management training institutions, national relief officials, disaster case histories and stockpile inventories, and establishment of registers of such specializations as donor expertise, and search and rescue teams;

(c) Development of the UNDRO reference library and of its capacity to "network" effectively with similar entities world wide;

(d) Provision of assistance to disaster-prone developing countries in upgrading data and information management mechanisms that must be in place prior to a disaster as an aid to national and international disaster relief efforts;

(e) Publication of information manuals and "UNDRO News" and production of video films and messages;

(f) Development of databases to include historical data and country disaster management profiles.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. SPECIAL EMERGENCY PROGRAMMES

(a) Objectives

37.39 Special emergencies by their nature are very unpredictable, thus the legislative authority for the subprogramme stems from specific resolutions of the General Assembly in response to each critical situation. In the past decade, the Assembly has called for special emergency programmes of various complexities and in favour of a substantial number of countries in Africa.

37.40 Complex emergency situations are usually brought to the attention of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General by the Government concerned, in some cases by the resident co-ordinator of the United Nations system in the country concerned, and in other cases by donor Governments, non-governmental organizations and the media. They are frequently characterized by civil strife, the presence of

large numbers of displaced persons and a varying degree of famine. By their nature, they involve multiple factors and include politically sensitive issues, which requires the Secretary-General to co-ordinate the assistance provided by the organizations of the United Nations system concerned. Experience has shown that it is particularly important to distinguish such situations from sudden natural disasters and from activities which may be considered as falling within the domain of normal economic development.

37.41 Although the multiple features of each emergency vary and the response is adjusted to the priorities and special needs of the recipient country, the objective of the subprogramme is to provide, in the shortest time possible, concerted humanitarian assistance frequently to large numbers of persons affected by famine or displaced by civil strife or other disorders. In order to do so effectively, the subprogramme will aim at achieving the following more specific objectives:

(a) To assess as accurately as possible the urgent needs of the country or population concerned;

(b) To mobilize the most positive response from the international donor community;

(c) To deliver and distribute assistance to the affected populations in the most efficient and cost-effective manner;

(d) To strengthen inter-agency co-ordination, which involves achieving consensus on the evaluation of needs, harmonizing policy approaches to relief operations, and creating unified methods and structures for delivering assistance in the field.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

37.42 The activities undertaken by the Secretariat in response to a decision of the General Assembly or of the Secretary-General are usually the following:

(a) Dispatch to the affected country of an inter-agency assessment mission in the shortest time possible. The mission prepares detailed reports on the humanitarian requirements and priority needs of affected populations in co-operation with the Government and in consultation with potential aid donors;

(b) Provision by the members of the mission of advisory services to the Government, upon its request, on the most effective systems for delivery and distribution of international assistance;

(c) Preparation of an appeal document for the mobilization of emergency assistance from the international community, on the basis of the findings of the inter-agency assessment mission. That report provides an overview of the complexities of the emergency, including the agricultural and economic situation, existing food and medical supplies and unmet needs, as well as appropriate measures that should be taken to relieve the humanitarian crisis. The report also indicates the measures by which the Government plans to lead the country out of the emergency situation and presents the proposed relief activities in the form of specific projects, with independent funding possible for each project;

(d) Provision of substantive support to the inter-agency task force on complex emergencies and to the periodic co-ordination meetings with donor Governments and non-governmental organizations;

(e) Establishment of monitoring arrangements to oversee existing emergency programmes in order to report satisfactorily to the General Assembly and to aid donors, and to monitor economic developments having a direct bearing on emergency situations and the provision of related assistance programmes.

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MAJOR PROGRAMME VIII. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Programme 38. Public information

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
A.	Programme	38.1 - 38.8	2
	1. General orientation	38.1 - 38.3	2
	2. Overall strategy	38.4 - 38.6	2
	3. Subprogramme structure and priorities	38.7 - 38.8	3
B.	Subprogrammes	38.9 - 38.16	4
	1. Promotional services	38.9 - 38.12	4
	2. Information services	38.13 - 38.16	6

* The present document contains programme 38 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The complete medium-term plan will subsequently be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1).

PROGRAMME 38. PUBLIC INFORMATION

A. Programme

1. General orientation

38.1 The basic legislative authority for programme 38 (Public information) is General Assembly resolution 13 (I), which has been further elaborated in subsequent annual resolutions on questions relating to information, the most recent of which is General Assembly resolution 44/50 of 8 December 1989.

38.2 The primary objective of the programme is to promote an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the Organization. The approach to information activities will continue to be based on two complementary concepts - promotion and coverage. One will ensure that the planning and development of strategies, as well as the production of public information materials, will be oriented by and highlight the major themes and priority areas mandated by the General Assembly, through multi-media promotional campaigns; while the other will ensure adequate media coverage and public interest in the ongoing activities of the Organization. Where appropriate, information activities will be developed in the context of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

38.3 The achievement of the objectives of this programme is, however, faced with a number of challenges, including:

(a) The diversity in cultural, linguistic, political and regional interests within the United Nations membership, which calls for a dynamic information approach that is sufficiently flexible but consistent in meeting the varying information needs of the peoples around the world about the United Nations;

(b) The complementarity of activities within the United Nations system, including the area of information and communication, which creates the risk of a duplication of work;

(c) The rapidly evolving technologies in the field of communications and the need for rapid dissemination of information;

(d) Reconciling growing information needs with finite resources available for public information activities in the context of the budget of the Organization.

2. Overall strategy

38.4 The programme will be implemented by the Department of Public Information. Other organizational units of the Secretariat are involved in public information activities to the extent that the latter require technical and substantive expertise that is not available in the Department of Public Information or when its resources are insufficient. In those cases, the Department of Public Information provides advice to the substantive units concerned, as appropriate, and further efforts will be made to consolidate and co-ordinate public information activities in accordance with paragraph 17 of General Assembly resolution 43/213 of 21 December 1988. Co-ordination will be enhanced with all departments of the

Secretariat, and in particular with those responsible for the priority themes of the Organization.

35.5 The programme will continue to be reviewed annually by the Committee on Information and by the Special Political Committee of the General Assembly.

38.6 The overall strategy of the Department will include:

(a) Reviewing trends of opinion throughout the world about the activities of the United Nations and the extent to which an informed understanding of the work of the United Nations is being secured;

(b) Producing public information materials directed at clearly defined audiences. Efforts will be made to sustain and enlarge these audiences, particularly those that have a multiplier effect, such as the media, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions;

(c) Maintaining a global network of United Nations information centres and services, with an adequate regional and linguistic balance, in order to ensure the highest possible local presence for United Nations activities, purposes and programmes in political, economic, social and humanitarian fields, particularly in those regions where mass information media are less developed;

(d) Strengthening co-operation and co-ordination within the United Nations system through the mechanism of the Joint United Nations Information Committee, in view of the complementarity of the activities in the field of information and communication and in order to avoid duplication of activities. Whenever possible, joint projects and programmes will be encouraged to the greatest extent possible;

(e) Increasing gradually the computerization of operations and access to new technologies for the production and distribution of public information material;

(f) Setting up and refining the parameters used in evaluating production and distribution activities so as to improve their overall impact. The Department will continue to determine the extent of its access to audiences, media outlets, as well as public opinion trends about the United Nations.

3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

38.7 On the basis of the general orientation of this programme, two subprogrammes are proposed under this programme:

Subprogramme 1: Promotional services

Subprogramme 2: Information services

38.8 Priority will be given to subprogramme 1, Promotional services.

B. Subprogrammes

SUBPROGRAMME 1. PROMOTIONAL SERVICES

(a) Objectives

38.9 The legislative authority for this subprogramme is derived from General Assembly resolution 13 (I) and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1012 (XXXVII) and 1806 (LV). The mandate is further elaborated in General Assembly resolution 44/50, in particular paragraph 1, section II.

38.10 Public awareness and media coverage in relation to United Nations activities are still inadequate and the profile and visibility of the United Nations around the world need to be increased. Recent positive developments affecting long-standing world problems are in part attributable to the wide-ranging activities undertaken in the context of General Assembly mandates on which an informed understanding among the peoples of the world is still wanting. This is especially true in the areas of:

(a) Peace, security and disarmament (including peace-keeping and peace-making operations);

(b) The struggle against apartheid, and the question of Palestine;

(c) Self-determination and decolonization;

(d) Human rights (including issues of racial discrimination);

(e) Development (including economic and social issues, the establishment of the new international economic order, external debt, African recovery, the environment, drugs, the fourth United Nations development decade, media development and the establishment of a new world information and communications order, women and youth).

38.11 The objectives of this subprogramme are to promote to the greatest possible extent an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations among the peoples of the world; more specifically, the objectives of this subprogramme are to develop well-planned activities aimed at achieving clear and limited goals; to develop more effective implementation strategies, involving the clarification of concepts, the selection of media and other vehicles for the implementation of planned activities; to maintain closer co-ordination within the Secretariat and the whole system, not only in the planning of public information activities, but also in the implementation of approved activities through a common strategy; and to provide counsel, support and strategic planning in relation to public information needs to other areas of the Secretariat, in order to maximize media and public awareness and utilization of United Nations materials. Information activities will be adjusted constantly to changing needs and circumstances.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

38.12 During the plan period, promotional activities will be implemented on priority issues, special events and observances for each of the priority themes of the United Nations. Where appropriate, they will be developed in the context of

the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, which will provide a valuable framework for concomitant efforts to promote awareness of the programmes of activity carried out by the Organization and to enhance the Organization's profile and visibility on the world stage. This will entail:

(a) Providing communications support to the activities of the Secretary-General and other senior staff and increasing public awareness of the role of the United Nations in multilateral diplomacy;

(b) Ensuring regular contacts with other Secretariat departments and with other organizations of the United Nations system in the planning and implementation of public information activities; and consolidating and co-ordinating information activities in the field with other members of the United Nations system, in order to improve efficiency in the delivery of public information;

(c) Planning public information activities and strategies by which they are to be implemented, utilizing all media; developing and implementing promotional campaigns for international conferences and observances proclaimed by the General Assembly;

(d) Preparing pamphlets, booklets, information kits, video cassettes, photographic and other materials as needed, and in as many local languages as possible, to promote a priority issue, a specific event or the United Nations in general;

(e) Maintaining an efficient and effective distribution system for all the Department's information material, using up-to-date methods of transmission, including satellite and electronic transmission of information; co-ordinating physical and electronic distribution of departmental information products to information centres and services, the media and non-governmental organizations;

(f) Continuing the development of a system that ensures consistency of style and signatures on United Nations products;

(g) Increasing co-production arrangements in order to enhance the promotion of United Nations mandates and foster the utilization of materials produced;

(h) Gathering and analysing results of existing public opinion surveys that have a bearing on the United Nations and its activities; monitoring the media, assessing public opinion based on publicly available material and providing feedback thereon; and collaborating with existing organizations around the world that engage in public opinion surveys for purposes of including in their surveys questions of interest to the United Nations;

(i) Reviewing the impact of the information programmes of the Department in order to improve programme effectiveness; and conducting appropriate research to assess public attitudes concerning the United Nations and its activities;

(j) Expanding an out-reach programme for editors and other senior media representatives, particularly those whose organizations have no accredited correspondents at the United Nations; and organizing editors round tables to familiarize media leaders with United Nations issues and procedures;

(k) Maintaining a speaker's bureau to provide qualified speakers on the United Nations for schools and universities, professional and business associations, radio and television organizations and other interested groups; and responding to public inquiries of a general nature.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. INFORMATION SERVICES

(a) Objectives

38.13 The most recent legislative mandate for this subprogramme derives from General Assembly resolution 44/50, in particular subparagraph 3 of paragraph 1, section II.

38.14 While major developments and announcements are covered regularly by the media, it is a fact that regular coverage of United Nations meetings and debates does not always meet the expectation of Member States. The format of some electronic programmes has excluded the United Nations from many markets, while diversified formats would allow flexible utilization of United Nations materials. Planning of programmes has not ensured sufficient complementarity in the focus of productions in radio, television and publications. United Nations information materials have not been consistently available in appropriate languages.

38.15 The objectives of this subprogramme are to provide all services needed for the daily, weekly and periodical press, both at Headquarters and other United Nations offices, that may be required to ensure that the press is supplied with full information about the activities of the United Nations; and to produce and ensure timely coverage of United Nations activities, and distribution of information materials in formats and languages that maximize utilization by media and other re-disseminators to as broad an audience as possible.

(b) Course of action for the Secretariat

38.16 During the medium-term plan period, the Department of Public Information will:

(a) Prepare summaries of all major meetings and events in English and French for use by press correspondents, delegations and the United Nations Secretariat;

(b) Prepare press releases that provide wide coverage of events in accordance with priorities set by the General Assembly in English and French in a form appropriate for immediate distribution by media agencies;

(c) Introduce new formats of weekly news summaries;

(d) Seek new international broadcasters for wider dissemination of radio and television news and feature programmes;

(e) Provide action-oriented photographs of major meetings and events on a timely basis for use by media, publications and delegations;

(f) Produce daily and weekly radio news spots and news magazines for distribution by telephone feed and satellite to national and international broadcasters;

(g) Provide television coverage of major United Nations events for use by outside broadcasters and for archival purposes;

(h) Produce a selection of electronic magazines (radio and television) on United Nations activities and priority issues for wide distribution;

(i) Produce a high quality portfolio of monthly, quarterly and annual publications aimed at specific audiences. The publications portfolio will include: basic documentation, institutional references and periodicals;

(j) Improve the availability, scope and timeliness of documentation on the United Nations at the global network of United Nations information centres and their locally affiliated depositories in order to increase access and impact;

(k) Provide liaison services to visiting representatives of the media;

(l) Provide accreditation, liaison and information services to press correspondents at the United Nations and to non-governmental organizations.

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PROPOSED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997*

MAJOR PROGRAMME IX. CONFERENCE SERVICES

Programme 39. Conference and library services

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
A.	Programme	39.1 - 39.18	2
	1. General orientation	39.1 - 39.7	2
	2. Overall strategy	39.8 - 39.16	4
	3. Subprogramme structure and priorities	39.17	7
B.	Subprogrammes	39.18 - 39.59	8
	1. Editorial and official records services	39.18 - 39.26	8
	2. Meeting, interpretation and verbatim reporting services	39.27 - 39.39	9
	3. Translation services	39.40 - 39.45	12
	4. Publishing services	39.46 - 39.55	13
	5. Library information services	39.56 - 39.59	16

* The present document contains programme 39 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. The complete medium-term plan will subsequently be issued in final printed form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1).

PROGRAMME 39. CONFERENCE AND LIBRARY SERVICES

A. Programme

1. General orientation

39.1 The basic mandate for programme 39 is derived from Articles 97 and 98 of the Charter of the United Nations, in which the Secretary-General is designated as the chief administrative officer of the Organization with responsibility for performing such functions as are entrusted to him by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Trusteeship Council and the Economic and Social Council; and from the rules of procedure of those organs, which provide that the Secretariat shall receive, translate into the appropriate official languages, print and distribute documents, reports and resolutions of the organs and their subsidiary bodies, shall interpret speeches made at meetings, shall prepare, print and circulate the records of the sessions, shall have custody and ensure proper preservation of the documents in the archives of the organs, shall distribute documents to the Members of the United Nations and, generally, shall perform all other work that the organs may require. In its resolution XIV (I) of 12 February 1946, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take over and maintain the Library and Archives of the League of Nations. Since then the Organization has established libraries at major centres to enable the delegations, Secretariat and other official groups of the Organization to obtain, with the greatest possible speed, convenience and economy, the library materials needed in the execution of their duties.

39.2 The basic mandates are supplemented by General Assembly resolutions concerning the pattern of conferences and, in particular, the need to ensure the most rational and effective use of all United Nations conference centres and facilities, the terms of reference of the Committee on Conferences, the control and limitation of documents and meeting records, and the equal treatment of languages at the United Nations. The most recent and comprehensive of those resolutions are 37/14 of 16 November 1982, 40/243 of 18 December 1985, 42/207 of 11 December 1987, and 43/222 of 21 December 1988. Functions and organizational arrangements for conference library services are set out in several sections of the organizational manual of the Secretariat and include: the sections relating to the Department of Conference Services (ST/SGB/Organization, section Q/Rev.2, and ST/SGB/Organization, section Q/Rev.2 (Part II)) at Headquarters; the Conference Services Division at Geneva (ST/SGB/Organization, section S, as modified by ST/SGB/186 and ST/SGB/189); the United Nations Office at Vienna (ST/SGB/Organization, section Z, as modified by ST/SGB/218); the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ST/SGB/Organization, section K (II)); the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ST/SGB/Organization, section K (III)); the Economic Commission for Africa (ST/SGB/Organization, section K (IV)/Rev.1); the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ST/SGB/Organization, section K (V)); and the United Nations Environment Programme (ST/SGB/Organization, section O).

39.3 Policies governing the preparation, production, distribution and sale of United Nations documents are determined, and their implementation monitored, by an interdepartmental Publications Board, comprising representatives of author departments and processing services and chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments, whose Department provides the Board's secretariat. The Board is assisted by a Working Committee at Headquarters and by subsidiary bodies at other duty stations. Under its terms of reference, set out in

ST/SGB/Organization, annex I, the Board, inter alia, co-ordinates planning and supervises execution of the publications programme and issues directives and regulations on behalf of the Secretary-General on publications policies and practices. The responsibility for the quality and timely submission of materials for processing remains with author departments and offices and the Board has not concerned itself with public information materials except those specifically included in the publications programme.

39.4 Within the framework of these mandates, the general aims of this programme will be as follows:

(a) To provide to the organs of the United Nations, other intergovernmental bodies and their respective subsidiary bodies the services required for the efficient and effective conduct of their meetings and conferences in a manner that makes optimum and most cost-effective use of the conference services, resources and facilities resources available world wide;

(b) To develop and plan, for submission to the Committee on Conferences, a proposed calendar of meetings for the Organization that adheres to the resolutions and rules and principles of conference planning and that is designed in such a way as to allow for the most cost-effective use, world wide, of conference-servicing resources, centres and facilities;

(c) To implement the publications programme of the Organization, as approved by intergovernmental bodies, in an efficient and economical manner;

(d) To ensure the quality, timely issuance, availability and wide dissemination of documents and publications produced by the Organization to Member States and other users in a broad variety of readily accessible forms;

(e) To ensure adherence to the procedures established for the control and limitation of documentation in material submitted for processing;

(f) To undertake advance planning in connection with the publications programme so as to establish realistic budget estimates, to foresee translation requirements, to optimize the allocation of resources among publications, to ensure publication at the proper time and in proper quantities, to optimize the use of internal reproduction capacity, to minimize the costs of external contractual printing, to increase the general awareness of United Nations publications and to control the execution of the programme.

39.5 While the actual requirements for conference services depend upon the calendar of conferences approved by the General Assembly for each biennium and are difficult to estimate for the entire medium-term plan period, several factors that are likely to affect the level of services can be identified. On the one hand, the enhanced role of the Organization in the preservation of international peace and security, and the trend towards greater multilateral co-operation in a wide range of economic, social, environmental and legal fields, are two factors that may tend to increase the number of meetings and conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations, as well as the consequent demand for conference services during the medium-term plan period. On the other hand, several intergovernmental bodies are nearing completion of their work and would no longer require servicing. In addition, studies under way of United Nations intergovernmental structures and

functions in certain areas, notably in the economic and social fields, as called for under recommendation 8 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations, 1/ may result in modifications of intergovernmental machinery that could decrease conference-servicing requirements. With regard to library and information services, there will clearly be a growing demand for a variety of information and reference services that go considerably beyond those traditionally provided by libraries. For the programme as a whole, it will continue to be important to make every effort to use the resources available in the most efficient and effective manner possible, so as to respond to new and changing requirements of Member States in a timely and economic manner, while maintaining high standards of quality.

39.6 A major concern during the medium-term plan period will be how to harness advances in technology and communications effectively so as to establish a truly global network of conference and library services that can be used for the electronic storage, remote retrieval and transmission of texts and images world wide. Such a network should bring significant gains in the timeliness and efficiency with which services are provided to conferences and meetings, with parity of treatment for all official languages and improvements in the access of Member States and other users to the documents and publications of the Organization.

39.7 An important issue of continuing concern is that of making the most efficient use of scarce resources. Under the guidance of the Committee on Conferences, every effort will be made to plan an efficient programme of meetings and conferences that makes the most rational and effective use of all United Nations conference centres, resources and facilities. Attention will be given to measures for controlling and limiting the volume, as well as improving the quality and timely issuance, of documents and publications produced by the Organization. In the search for greater efficiency, the work of the programme will be organized to derive maximum benefit from the growing range of technological innovations available for conference and library services.

2. Overall strategy

39.8 By its resolution 43/222 B, the General Assembly decided to retain the Committee on Conferences as a permanent subsidiary organ to advise it on all matters pertaining to the organization of conferences in the United Nations. In this context, the Committee is responsible for planning and co-ordinating conferences and meetings, in close consultation with the Secretariat and all relevant bodies in the preparation of the draft calendar of conferences, with the aim of staggering meetings throughout the year and avoiding overlapping; examining the proposals of the Secretary-General on the draft calendar of conferences and meetings and recommending to the General Assembly a draft calendar to meet the needs of the United Nations and to assure optimum use of conference-servicing resources; acting on behalf of the Assembly with respect to departures from the approved calendar; presenting recommendations to the Assembly on ways and means to ensure optimum use of conference facilities and services, including documentation; advising the Assembly on the current and future requirements of the Organization for conference services, facilities and documentation; making recommendations to the Assembly on means of ensuring improved co-ordination of conferences within the United Nations system, including conference services and facilities, and to conduct appropriate related consultations; monitoring implementation on General Assembly resolutions on organization and servicing of, and documentation for, conferences

and meetings; monitoring publications policy with the assistance of the Publications Board of the Secretariat and taking into account the positions adopted by the Committee on Information and other relevant bodies; and reporting annually thereon to the General Assembly.

39.9 The overall responsibility for the direction and development of conference-servicing policy in the United Nations rests with the Under-Secretary-General for Conference Services and Special Assignments. Within the Secretariat, responsibility for the provision of the full range of conference and library services at Headquarters rests with the Department of Conference Services and at Geneva with the Conference Services Division. At Vienna, current arrangements involve shared responsibility for provision of conference and library services to the organizations at the Vienna International Centre. Under those arrangements, a joint meetings and interpretation service is provided by the United Nations, a joint language and documents service by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and joint library and printing services by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In its resolution 44/201 A of 21 December 1989, the General Assembly endorsed the view of the Secretary-General that a single conference-servicing facility at the Vienna International Centre would represent the ideal solution from the standpoint of cost efficiency and that a unified service operated by the United Nations would be best equipped to promote the most efficient and effective use of scarce resources. A review of common and joint services at Vienna is under way and the results of the review and related consultations with other organizations concerned will be reported to the General Assembly in due course for appropriate action. Consequently, it is not possible at this point to say with certainty what secretariat arrangements will apply for conference and library services at Vienna during the medium-term plan period. More limited conference services are also available at other duty stations, most notably at Bangkok, Santiago, Addis Ababa, Baghdad and Nairobi, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat). Additional conference services for conferences and meetings at these locations and elsewhere are organized by the Department of Conference Services at Headquarters or the Conference Services Division at Geneva, depending on their location. In addition, the Department of Conference Services is responsible for establishing policies, procedures and practices for, and co-ordinating the provision of, conference services in the Secretariat.

39.10 The activities to be carried out within the programme of conference and library services during the period of the medium-term plan will obviously depend upon the number, location, nature and timing of meetings and conferences to be held, as well as the number and characteristics of documents and publications required by Member States and their needs for access to electronic information stored in data bases of the Secretariat.

39.11 In order to address those issues, the programme will continue to place considerable emphasis upon the application of technological innovations in every aspect of its activities. In the previous medium-term plan period, attention concentrated upon the introduction of word-processing capacities in all official languages and the establishment of a computer-based documents recording, information and tracking system. During the 1992-1997 period, the focus will be on the utilization of the United Nations telecommunications network linking conference

and library services in New York, at Geneva and at Vienna, as well as the regional commissions and other duty stations, so that not only information but also the full text of documents in all official languages can be stored, retrieved and transmitted electronically world-wide, using optical disc technology. Developments in the field of machine-assisted translation will also be further examined. The first steps will be the in-house implementation of computerized reference and terminology data bases in all official languages, the expansion of access to external terminology data bases and the linkage of data bases to translators' work-stations. Greater use will also be made of electronic publishing techniques to improve the quality of United Nations documents and publications and to reduce the time and expenditure required for their production. Methods of dissemination of documents and publications produced by the Organization are likely to expand into new forms, with greater use made of videocassettes, CD-ROM (compact disk-read-only memory), optical disc technology and other forms of "electronic publications". Despite the inconclusive results of pilot projects in teleconferencing in the 1970s, subsequent developments in this area, including the recent favourable experience of the International Telecommunication Union, warrant further study and analysis during the period to assess the suitability of the technique to the nature and conditions of United Nations meetings and conferences.

39.12 Innovations will not be limited to the application of technology. In consultation with author departments, a thorough review and analysis will be undertaken of the documentation requirements of the Organization, as well as of the problems giving rise to delays in the submission of documents and publications for processing. On the basis of that analysis, new measures will be initiated to control and limit the volume of documentation and to improve its quality and timely issuance.

39.13 In a similar vein, a thorough review and analysis will be undertaken of the meetings requirements of the Organization and of possible adjustments therein that could assist in alleviating the chronic problems that delay the issuance of documentation. Measures aimed at improving co-operation and co-ordination with substantive secretariats will be intensified in order to reduce wastage of resources and increase availability of stand-by arrangements, such as services and facilities required due to changes in the programme of meetings.

39.14 Efficient provision of conference and library services world wide clearly requires effective co-ordination between the various organizational units responsible for such services at different duty stations, all the more so with recent advances in communications and other technologies. In this context, and as noted above, the Department of Conference Services is given overall responsibility for establishing policies, procedures and practices for, and co-ordinating the provision of, conference services in the Secretariat. In addition, the Department provides the secretariat of the Committee on Conferences, which advises the General Assembly on all matters relating to the organization of conferences in the United Nations. The Department also provides the secretariat of the Publications Board which has Secretariat-wide responsibility for the publications programme of the Organization and for publications policy. In a similar vein, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library at Headquarters is responsible for co-ordination of library policies, including the introduction of technical innovations, with United Nations libraries away from Headquarters and co-operates with them on projects and activities of mutual interest. In addition to author departments and offices, conference-servicing units must also co-operate closely with substantive and technical secretariats of the various intergovernmental bodies serviced. In this

context, particular mention should be made of co-operation between the Department of Conference Services and the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services, which, inter alia, is responsible for the editing of documentation for the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Implementation of a programme of technological innovations will also involve close co-operation with the Office of General Services, which is responsible for planning and implementing telecommunications and technological innovations for the Organization, for providing overall policy and technical guidelines in matters relating to computers, office equipment and telecommunications and for enforcing standards set by the Technological Innovations Board. Co-operation will also be pursued between the Office of General Services and the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in respect of management of the archives of the Organization. Successful implementation of the proposed programme of technological innovations and other improvements will depend heavily on training, for which co-operation with the Office of Human Resources Management will be maintained. The special training programme for language staff, initiated in co-operation with the Office of Human Resources Management, will be continued and extended to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other duty stations and the criteria for recruitment of language staff will be updated and clearly defined, in close co-operation with the Office of Human Resources Management.

39.15 Active co-operation will also be pursued with other organizations of the United Nations system. Such co-operation will be pursued, inter alia, through the Inter-agency Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications, and the Dag Hammarskjöld Library will pursue its mandate to co-operate with other libraries within the common system on projects and activities of mutual interest. Continued co-operation with UNIDO and IAEA will also be sought in whatever arrangements are eventually agreed for conference and library services at the Vienna International Centre.

39.16 Co-operation with intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations and enterprises outside the United Nations system, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Federal Translation Bureau of Canada, and various institutions or commercial firms offering computerized data bases will be expanded, particularly in such areas as on-line data bases and external publishing.

3. Subprogramme structure and priorities

39.17 The programme on conference and library services will consist of the following subprogrammes:

Subprogramme 1. Editorial and official records services

Subprogramme 2. Meeting, interpretation and verbatim reporting services

Subprogramme 3. Translation services

Subprogramme 4. Publishing services

Subprogramme 5. Library information services

The services provided under the subprogrammes constitute an integrated package of support for basic functions of the Organization; relative priorities, therefore, cannot usefully be assigned.

B. Subprogrammes

SUBPROGRAMME 1. EDITORIAL AND OFFICIAL RECORDS SERVICES

(a) Objectives

39.18 Under the general mandates outlined in paragraphs 39.1 to 39.3 above, subprogramme 1 deals with the editing of parliamentary documentation, including official records, and certain other documents and publications with the preparation of final texts for reproduction, and with the control of documentation and the monitoring of the processing of documents by conference services. It also covers the planning, organizing and managing of the introduction of technological innovations for all aspects of conference and library services.

39.19 Problems to be tackled during the medium-term plan period include finding ways to control and limit the volume of parliamentary documentation, to maintain high standards of quality for both parliamentary documentation and other publications of the Organization, to eliminate the backlog of official records at Headquarters and to maintain a coherent and effective programme of technological innovations.

39.20 The subprogramme will aim to ensure the timely issuance of parliamentary documents in correct form and with parity of treatment for all official languages, to control and limit the volume of documentation in compliance with directives of intergovernmental bodies, to ensure that the publications programme of the United Nations is implemented in compliance with the decisions and directives of the relevant intergovernmental bodies and that the publications are of high quality, to make the most effective and efficient use of resources available world wide, including through appropriate application of technological advances, for editing, translating, processing, reproducing and distributing United Nations documents and publications, and to eliminate the backlog of official records at Headquarters.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

39.21 By the end of 1991, the computer-based Document Records, Information and Tracking System is expected to be fully operational in New York and at Geneva, linking all units responsible for the processing of documents and publications, as well as linking other selected editorial units at Headquarters. The system is expected to improve planning and scheduling of work by providing current and accurate information concerning the status of each document and by providing statistics to facilitate analysis of the flow and distribution of work.

39.22 During the period 1992-1997, the introduction of a computer-based system of full-text transmission, using networked work-stations as a complement to the Document Records, Information and Tracking System, should lead to a significant reduction in the time required for processing parliamentary documentation at all duty stations. This system, linked to a reference and terminology data base, is expected to facilitate on-screen editing and to reduce the time required for referencing, particularly in respect of official records. To the extent that an

increasing number of documents will be received by the text-processing pools in electronic form, the time needed for the input of texts will also be reduced. The introduction of procedures in which text-processing pools send final corrected electronic documents to the publishing services for electronic typesetting and printing is also expected to reduce the total time required for processing documents.

39.23 These measures will also facilitate archiving and permit the establishment of an on-line data base containing the full texts of parliamentary documentation readily accessible to Member States and other external users, as well as to staff of the Secretariat. The introduction of optical disc technology for the storage and retrieval of parliamentary documents is expected to proceed in a phased manner during the medium-term plan period.

39.24 The quality of parliamentary documentation and other publications is also expected to be improved through the establishment of the full-text transmission system. There will be fewer possibilities for errors, since a text need not be retyped several times during its processing, and the readability and presentation of documents will improve, since it will be possible to reproduce documents electronically in typeset form. It is expected that, by the end of the medium-term plan period, a computer-based system for electronic typesetting in all official languages will be well established. In addition, the system, with its links to reference and terminology data bases, will permit more comprehensive and faster referencing of documents by editors and translators.

39.25 Other measures to improve the quality of documents and publications will include closer contact with author departments, which is particularly important in view of their increasing use of electronic publishing techniques, and the issuance of appropriate editorial guidelines. Greater co-ordination and supervision by the Department of Conference Services of the work of editors throughout the Secretariat is also planned. In addition to the editorial guidelines mentioned above, a revised version of the Editorial Manual will be prepared and issued in English and French during the medium-term plan period.

39.26 Concurrently, under the guidance of the Committee on Conferences, efforts will intensify to limit and control the volume of documentation in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies and to ensure compliance with their instructions. Monitoring of recurrent publications of the Organization will continue in order to identify any publications that may have lost their usefulness and should no longer be issued.

SUBPROGRAMME 2. MEETING, INTERPRETATION AND VERBATIM REPORTING SERVICES

(a) Objectives

39.27 Under the general mandates outlined in paragraphs 39.1 to 39.3 above, subprogramme 2 deals with the servicing of the Committee on Conferences, the planning and servicing of meetings, and the provision of interpretation and verbatim reporting services.

39.28 Activities under the subprogramme are likely to have to tackle the following issues and problems during the medium-term plan period:

(a) Following its retention as a permanent subsidiary organ of the General Assembly with new and broader terms of reference, the Committee on Conferences is likely to require more detailed expert assistance from the Secretariat, especially analytical material on all areas of conference servicing, and it may well be required to hold more meetings than previously;

(b) With increasing activity at the intergovernmental level, there is likely to be an increase in the number of informal meetings with a related increased demand for interpretation services, as well as an increasing fluidity in the scheduling of meetings;

(c) Periodic mismatches between the supply of conference services and the demand for them at different locations can be expected to recur;

(d) Conference facilities assigned to various intergovernmental bodies are frequently underutilized;

(e) Competing demands from non-United Nations users of free-lance interpretation staff are likely to cause difficulties in advance recruitment, owing to changes in dates and programmes; this can also affect the quality of the free-lance staff available;

(f) The number of meetings in technical fields, with special demands on interpretation capacity, is likely to increase;

(g) Provision of verbatim records in compliance with the rules of procedure of the Security Council and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly necessitates a high level of expertise in the services provided;

(h) Changes in the technological provision of all services at Headquarters will require updating in the Verbatim Reporting Service of the Department of Conference Services in order to ensure compatibility;

(i) There is loss of professional time in verbatim reporting, owing to continuing manual processing at some levels.

39.29 General Assembly resolutions and rules and principles governing conference planning set parameters for the demand for meeting services, such as entitlements with regard to duration of sessions, and to servicing, including written meeting records. In some cases, legislative authority also sets the timing and venue of meetings, for example, the regular sessions of the General Assembly at Headquarters. The existing "established" supply of conference services and facilities has some flexibility to meet that demand in that resources and services can be moved, both physically and through telecommunications. In addition, of course, it can be supplemented by temporary staff and services.

39.30 Within this framework, the subprogramme is intended to accomplish the following:

(a) To develop and plan the Organization's meetings programme in adherence with the resolutions, rules and principles of conference planning, and to ensure that the programme is designed in such a way as to allow for the most cost-effective use, world wide, of conference-servicing resources, centres and facilities for approval by the Committee on Conferences, and to implement that

programme, once approved by the General Assembly as the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations;

(b) To reconcile the supply of and demand for conference-servicing resources through a determination of the meeting dates of the organs of the United Nations and their subsidiary bodies;

(c) To provide substantive services and analytical information to assist the Committee on Conferences in the fulfilment of its terms of references;

(d) To provide the organs of the United Nations and their subsidiary bodies with high-quality simultaneous and consecutive interpretation from and into the six official languages of the United Nations in the most cost-effective manner possible;

(e) To increase the linguistic flexibility of the interpretation staffing establishment and to decrease the response time to changes in the programme;

(f) To provide high-quality verbatim reporting services in the six official languages of the Organization for the Security Council, the General Assembly and other authorized bodies;

(g) To ensure high-quality and rapid processing of verbatim records.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

39.31 Demand for and supply of conference services at each location will be assessed and evaluated for each biennium of the medium-term plan period, and the draft calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for each biennium will be designed accordingly for consideration by the Committee on Conferences.

39.32 A detailed analysis of the annual, monthly, weekly and daily meetings programme will be undertaken at each location to provide information on patterns of actual utilization by user, which would assist in the identification and reallocation of services for ad hoc requests. Each meeting will be analysed in terms of uniformity in application of standards in servicing, and its organization will be analysed in order to identify problems and to recommend and implement changes as appropriate for future meetings.

39.33 Efforts will be directed towards establishing a data base management system which, once established, will increase staff-time available for analytical tasks. The system will also reduce the time required for processing the various reports prepared under the subprogramme, thus making them available for secretariat and delegation use in a more timely fashion.

39.34 Statistical and analytical studies of conference-servicing resources, services and facilities and of the pattern of meetings of intergovernmental bodies will be undertaken and results will be communicated to substantive secretariats, as appropriate.

39.35 In order to ensure an appropriate level of expertise in the permanent interpretation staffing establishment, changes in technical requirements will be assessed on a continuing basis and training needs will be determined.

39.36 In order to improve uniformity and familiarity with current multilingual terminology among interpreters, electronic linkages to available terminology data bases will be established. Applications of computer technology, such as teleconferencing, will be investigated and implemented, as appropriate, in order to improve response time to changes in requirements.

39.37 In order to ensure the existence of a pool of qualified free-lance interpreters, changes in the free-lance market will be continuously analysed and rosters of qualified staff will be developed, as appropriate.

39.38 With regard to verbatim reporting, changes in requirements will be assessed and methodologies developed for ensuring the corresponding level of expertise in the permanent staffing establishment, including familiarity with multilingual terminology. Changes in the free-lance market will be kept under review and rosters of qualified staff will be developed, as appropriate.

39.39 Available text-processing equipment and electronic linkage to other conference-servicing units will be analysed so that appropriate changes that will reduce the time required for processing of verbatim reports may be formulated and implemented.

SUBPROGRAMME 3. TRANSLATION SERVICES

(a) Objectives

39.40 Under the general mandates outlined in paragraphs 39.1 to 39.3 above, subprogramme 3 deals with the translation into the six official languages of the Organization of parliamentary documentation and other material and with the provision for that purpose of reference and terminology services. In addition, a more limited range of translation and related services are provided in German on an extrabudgetary basis, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3355 (XXIX) of 14 December 1978.

39.41 It is anticipated that the problems to be tackled in this regard will continue to include the late submission of documents by substantive departments, the poor quality or excessive length of some documents submitted, the unevenness of the translation work-load, owing to the bunching of meetings, the limited capacity of the translation services to translate from certain official languages, the increasingly technical nature of the texts submitted for translation, a shortage of skilled terminologists and the difficulties experienced in attracting and retaining the best available temporary staff, who remain an essential component of the operational capacity of the translation sector.

39.42 The main objective of the subprogramme will be to continue to ensure that the translation sector is staffed and equipped in such a manner as to ensure the equal treatment of the official languages of the Organization in the timely provision of translations of high quality. In order to enhance the quality of translations, it will be essential to keep abreast of developments in the field of terminology. In strengthening the translation capacity of the Organization during the medium-term plan period, a major objective will be to introduce machine-assisted translation, making full use of the new technologies available in the department or division in order to expedite the production of high-quality translations.

39.43 The previous medium-term plan period saw the preliminary phase of the introduction of new technology in the translation sector, generally concentrated in the area of terminology and reference. By the end of 1991, it is anticipated that a local communications network linking work-stations within translation services at Headquarters and at Geneva will have been established, permitting the electronic transmission of documents, as well as terminology and reference data; the first phase of an operational optical disc system at Geneva and at Headquarters will have been implemented, holding the promise of large-scale storage and retrieval of documentation which will be especially beneficial in the translation area; and the computer-based Document Records, Information and Tracking System will be fully operational, allowing more precise statistical data to be compiled.

39.44 The introduction of machine-assisted translation is expected to have significant effects on the method of work in the translation area, as well as in other areas of the production of documentation, both upstream and downstream, with the following results:

(a) The quality of work is expected to improve: on-line access to computer-based reference and terminology data bases, with full-text storage and retrieval, will reduce the time spent on research and alleviate some of the problems that were referred to above;

(b) In terms of quantity of work, the translators' output is expected to increase, especially with regard to documents that are repetitive in nature.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

39.45 The strategy for pursuing those objectives includes the following elements:

(a) Pilot projects will be developed in New York and at Geneva with a view to developing translation tools appropriate to each language;

(b) Special emphasis will be placed on terminology services, with due regard to the parity of treatment of the official languages. Through a major system improvement, terminology and reference data bases will be expended in all official languages and made available to a wider range of users;

(c) Automatic language/documentation identification and indexing tools will be developed to enable users to identify better the texts available in the optical disc system;

(d) All translation staff will have access, through a network, to the required data-base systems;

(e) Communications links will be developed so that contractual translators will increasingly have remote access to relevant terminology and reference data bases.

SUBPROGRAMME 4. PUBLISHING SERVICES

(a) Objectives

39.46 Under the general mandates outlined in paragraphs 39.1 to 39.3 above, subprogramme 4 deals with the final stages of the documentation process, namely,

printing, reproduction and distribution. As in the case of many other technical areas, these areas have been affected by far-reaching technological advances. The challenge facing the subprogramme, therefore, will be to harness these technological improvements as effectively as possible in improving the quality and timeliness of the materials produced, while minimizing the cost of operations.

39.47 The main aim of the subprogramme is to manage the introduction of new technology so as to achieve the most rational and cost-effective use of staff and equipment required for the preparation of manuscripts, typesetting, proof-reading, graphic and cartographic services, internal printing, distribution and provision of storage facilities and general-purpose printing and procurement.

39.48 During the medium-term plan period, activities under subprogramme 4 will also have the following aims:

(a) To improve the efficiency and timeliness of operations by computerizing all record-keeping functions at Headquarters and by establishing linkages both upstream and downstream for the tracking of sources of supply, jobs and invoices, as well as for budgetary monitoring. Appropriate modernization will also be pursued at other duty stations;

(b) To improve the appearance of publications by introducing a cohesive and unified graphics style that will establish a strong visual identity for all United Nations material;

(c) To integrate the preparation of maps with the electronic publishing and data-transmission networks of the Organization through the introduction of desktop mapping. Such capabilities will also permit the integration of statistical and demographic data, thereby providing the various sectors of the Organization with prompt and up-to-date carto-geographic information;

(d) To improve efficiency and timeliness in the reproduction area through computerized automation of the pre-press area at Headquarters. The introduction of an "electronic beam recorder" will be the first step in the application of an "image communication system" to implement direct digital transmission to and from the Reproduction Section. Appropriate modernization will also be pursued at other duty stations;

(e) To automate distribution activities appropriately, including through the application of optical disc technology;

(f) To promote the accurate and rapid identification of documents and publications through the development of a system of bar codes.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

39.49 Under the authority of the Publications Board, publishing policies will continue to be systematically reviewed and amended as necessary, thereby reflecting developments in the publishing field and in the Organization's publishing activities. Particular attention will be paid to making the publishing programme more effective and to attracting as wide a readership as possible.

39.50 The use of electronic publishing techniques will be implemented, thereby reducing reliance on external typesetting and increasing the efficiency and economy of the internal reproduction process. The introduction of electronic typesetting programmes, with the addition of personal computer-based desktop work-stations will permit faster and more economical production. Official records, in particular, will be produced directly from electronic data already corrected on word-processor terminals at the editorial stage. Automated insertion of typesetting specifications will generate laser printer output in camera-ready format. During this period, electronic work-stations will be introduced in the editing and copy preparation areas.

39.51 Editorial and typographical guidelines will be developed to ensure the creation of a uniform format and appearance by users of desktop publishing devices throughout the Organization. Those facilities should result in better information charting, graphing and presentation of statistical data, improvement in the quality of publications and facilitation of author usage of the extensive United Nations data bases to the fullest.

39.52 An integrated electronic data base approach to printing procurement, costing and planning will be developed at Headquarters, utilizing computer work-stations for the preparation of purchase orders, the payment of invoices and the tracking of works in progress. Suitable measures for modernization in this area will also be pursued at other duty stations.

39.53 The Cartographic Unit at Headquarters will refine and update its computerization of the cartographic process, keeping abreast and making use of new developments, while making available to end-users standardized machine-readable maps with official toponymy and boundary files. As the number of Member States that generate cartographic and geographic information in electronic form increases, the Unit will ensure the capability to receive that information.

39.54 In the area of reproduction at Headquarters, text and images will be transmitted electronically from the typing pools to the Reproduction Section, via cable, for processing by computer stations in that form. Thus linked to the existing automated projection plate-making device, the system that results will constitute a fully integrated computer-to-press operation. Retrofitting electronic controls on existing presses will be undertaken to reduce paper waste and improve the quality of the printing. Linkage of the Document Records, Information and Tracking System to the internal reproduction system will permit a more rational use of equipment and staff resources, ensuring the timely issuance of documentation in a more cost-effective manner. The introduction of optical disc technology, as well as eventual typesetting of documents, will affect the reproduction operation, but its full impact will have to be determined. Appropriate measures will also be taken to pursue modernization of reproduction facilities at other duty stations.

39.55 Information generated by the computerized inventory and stock control system at Headquarters will provide managerial data which, when analysed, will provide exact patterns of movement, utilization and distribution of the range of documents and publications produced. Computer terminals should be installed at the delegation and Secretariat distribution stations, integrally linked with both the Document Records, Information and Tracking System and United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS). It is anticipated that electronic distribution will supplement to a greater degree the current manual distribution of documents in hard copy through access to a new document-servicing centre based on optical disc

technology. Possibilities for modernization of distribution operations at other duty stations will also be explored.

SUBPROGRAMME 5. LIBRARY INFORMATION SERVICES

39.56 In its report on co-operation between and management of libraries of the United Nations system (A/39/299), the Joint Inspection Unit made a number of recommendations designed to improve the functioning and effectiveness of the libraries of the United Nations system. The Inspectors recommended establishment of an inter-library panel to help to develop a co-operative and effective network of United Nations system libraries and highlighted some issues for the panel to consider, including common indexing vocabularies and bibliographic control over the system's documentation; improved human resources planning for library staff; joint use of available and emerging technologies; strengthening effectiveness of depository library networks; and closer relations with information centre libraries, relevant UNESCO-supported programmes and international library organizations. The Inspectors also recommended the timely and well-planned application of new technologies and other management improvements, including emphasis on a more progressive and responsive approach; an effective and integrated library network within each organization, with necessary leadership, services and support provided by the central library; a clear definition of the library's responsibilities and functions within the overall information system of each organization; and the establishment and maintenance for each library of internal management objectives, work-load and staffing standards and analysis, longer-term planning process, and regular communication with users. In addition, the Inspectors made specific recommendations related to the United Nations Library at Geneva. In its report (A/39/603) on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions concurred with the Inspectors' view that there is need for closer co-operation between libraries of the United Nations system and recommended that the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination should review the matter further. The Advisory Committee noted that the recommendations concerned with management improvement and the introduction of new technology were generally endorsed by the Secretary-General and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. In its resolution 39/242, section III of 18 December 1984, the General Assembly concurred with the recommendations and observations of the Advisory Committee and requested the Secretary-General to implement them accordingly. In addition to the basic mandates outlined in paragraphs 39.1 to 39.3 above, therefore, subprogramme 5 continues to be guided by the approach thus endorsed by the Assembly.

39.57 The rapidly changing needs and increased prospects and possibilities in the information sector require that United Nations libraries continue a process of internal organizational restructuring and professional reorientation.

39.58 The subprogramme's principal aim is to enable the libraries of the United Nations to function as a network of co-operating information centres within a wider framework of co-operation with the libraries of other organizations of the system, on the one hand, producing and processing data, and on the other, supporting delegates, missions, Secretariat staff members and researchers from outside, in their needs for documentary and factual information.

(b) Course of action of the Secretariat

39.59 During the course of the medium-term plan period:

(a) User-oriented co-operation will be strengthened between the libraries of Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna and with the libraries of the other duty stations, for which support will be organized, particularly by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library. Various measures, including possibilities for staff rotation within and among libraries of the United Nations system, will be pursued in this context;

(b) A network of library information services of the United Nations system as a whole will be organized in close co-operation with the organizations involved. The growth in the range of interrelationships between technical subjects and the increasing possibilities for automation and telecommunications should make it increasingly feasible to share efforts and to exchange information among the libraries in the interest of the users systemwide. Such co-operation will be the subject of periodic meetings of the heads of libraries concerned;

(c) Improved co-operation with other international libraries, as well as more extensive use of non-United Nations services, will be pursued;

(d) Necessary co-operation will be pursued with the United Nations archives, especially to harmonize technological processing. The League of Nations archives at Geneva will be treated separately in order to offer an historical record of international relations to the community at large;

(e) The United Nations will promote access to its unrestricted information by bodies and persons outside the Organization, within the limits of the mandate of the United Nations library network;

(f) The libraries, in co-operation with the Department of Public Information, will seek the co-operation of the relevant United Nations offices in updating information facilities and providing professional training for librarians to ensure the availability of library information at depository libraries and United Nations information centres throughout the world;

(g) A coherent long-term programme of technological innovation will be carried out in respect of storage, retrieval and dissemination of United Nations information, as well as in respect of the management of library procedures;

(h) A dedicated system for integrated management and information for United Nations libraries will be installed, following a coherent plan and through co-operative preparations. It will be based on commercially available software and dedicated minicomputers at Headquarters and at Geneva, with batch transfer of the cataloguing and indexing data of the Geneva library to Headquarters. Such a library automation system, with adequate documentation and networking facilities and with an integrated approach to the various library management procedures, such as ordering, cataloguing, indexing, serials check-in, stock control and loans, is necessary for the enhancement of the UNBIS retrieval system. Reference tools, such as Indexes to Proceedings of the Security Council 1950-1963 and United Nations reference sources, will be issued by means of suitable output programmes;

(i) Appropriate linkage will be established between the dedicated library system and the Integrated Management Information System of the United Nations and its development and operation will be within the framework of co-operation established by the Advisory Committee for the Co-ordination of Information Systems;

(j) As part of the introduction of the optical disc system for storage and retrieval of documents, measures will be taken to enhance UNBIS, which will be used for full indexing to facilitate retrieval of documents;

(k) In order to minimize possible additional storage requirements for documents and publications and to preserve historical material, it is planned to transfer older documents to optical disc storage, requiring a corresponding retrospective conversion of non-machine-readable library data.

Notes

1/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 49 (A/41/49), pp. 7-8.